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NOVEMBER 1995

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# CHANDAMAMA

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## NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 26 DECEMBER 1995 No. 6

**SEVEN VOYAGES OF SINDBAD :** After his narrow escape from the Old Man of the Sea, Sindbad rejects all invitations to go on another voyage. But how long can he remain confined to the four walls of his residence? The bug of adventure bites him and he decides to try his luck once again. His ship is caught in strong currents and the captain is not able to manoeuvre the ship, which dashes against rocks and everybody is thrown into the sea. The captain distributes the stock of food on the ship to his passengers and leave them to meet their fate. Sindbad watches each one of his companions die of hunger. He builds a raft and allows himself to be carried away by the gushing waters of the river there. He reaches the island of Serendib, where the monarch asks him to stay as a royal guest. But the sixth voyage does not end there!

**THE RIVALS :** Mahaveer is a natural leader and is able to impose discipline and peace among the tribals. But he is getting old. The question arises: who will succeed him? Of course, it can be decided by a contest among them to find who is stronger, physically. There is already a rivalry among them – for the hand of Mahaveer's charming daughter, Kuyili. Mahaveer makes it known that she will be married to the one who will succeed him. How are the two contests resolved?

PLUS all the regular features – **PANCHATANTRA** in comics, **JOURNEY ALONG THE COAST** pull-out, **CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT**, and the sequel to **HARE-BREADTH ESCAPE**. Watch out!

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Founder  
CHAKRAPANI



Controlling Editor :  
NAGI REDDI

## Need to develop languages

Would it surprise our readers that India is the only country in the world where one has to depend on a foreign language to improve one's information on and knowledge of different topics and subjects? In a majority of the educational institutions—schools and colleges included—the medium of instruction is still English.

Even in a country like South Korea, with a population of 4.5 million, there are books in the native Korean language dealing with every sphere of human endeavour. True, India with a much larger population and a vast area has more than fifteen distinct regional languages, and not all of them have developed to such an extent as to have any wide literature on various subjects, especially those dealing with science and technology and their different aspects.

Whether the medium of teaching should be the mother-tongue or one need not be so rigid about this has been a long-standing controversy. Over the years, attempts have been successfully made to bring out books on different topics in the regional languages for use in classes up to the high school level. However, teaching of subjects in colleges in most States is still done in English.

In ancient days, Sanskrit was used for teaching the Vedas and other holy texts. It was the language adopted in royal courts, and for administrative purposes. As a result, formal education was denied to the common people. So much so, education and administration became a monopoly of a small section of people.

The British rulers seem to have taken advantage of this situation and imposed English in the system of education so that students coming out of schools and colleges could be absorbed in the field of administration. Even after they left our shores, we have continued to promote "English education", much to the detriment of the regional languages. They have to be developed to include necessary vocabulary to become the media of instruction in colleges and universities.



## Reunification or Autonomy?

Hong Kong is very much in the news these days. If you look for it in your school atlas, you will only find a tiny dot on the southeast coast of mainland China. But actually, this British colony is one peninsula and nearly 235 islands, spread over about 1,000 sq. km, with a population of 5,900,000.

Called a "Crown colony", Hong Kong has been under direct British rule for the past 155 years. Middle of September 1995 witnessed the last elections to the Legislative Council to be held under the aegis of Britain, because on June 30, 1997, the Union Jack will come down for the last time and China's red flag will go over the pole to mark Hong Kong's reunification with the mainland.

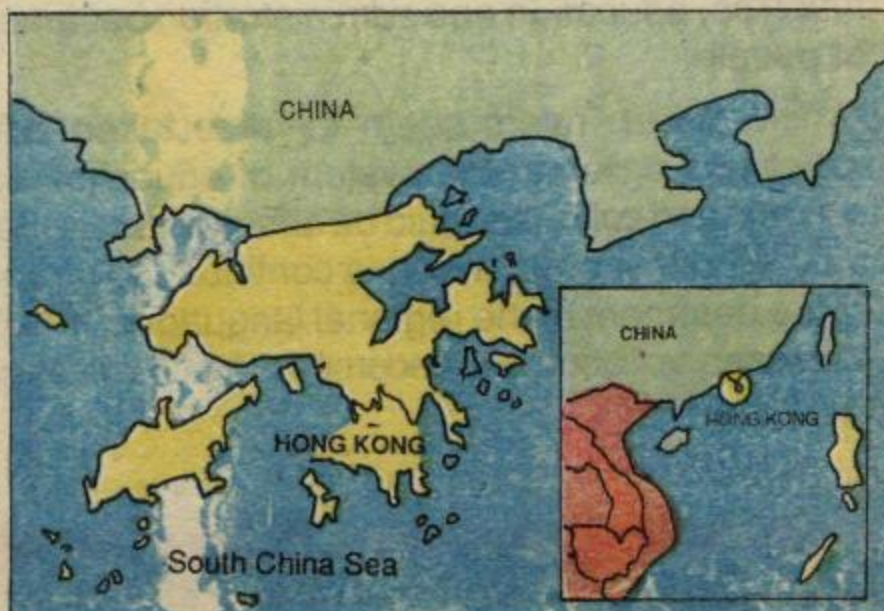
The first Europeans to set foot on the area were the Portuguese in the 16th century. Just before the beginning of the 18th century, the British landed there and their East India company, which paved the way for British rule in India, established trade relations with China. When Britain insisted on using opium as barter, their relations soured, leading to what came to be called the "Opium wars". China was forced to cede Hong Kong to Britain in 1841. In 1898, the area was given over to Britain on a 99 - year lease. In 1984, the two nations concluded an agreement, by which China will resume its sovereignty over Hong Kong from July 1, 1997.

The last fifty years saw Hong Kong emerging as a modern industrial success, producing textiles, electric and electronic equipment, machinery, chemicals, ceramics, plastics, and garments besides ship-building and repairs.

Mainly two parties contested the recent elections to the Legislative Council – the anti-China Democratic Party and the pro-China Democratic Alliance. The Council has 60 seats. The Democratic Party convincingly trounced the Alliance. The victory of the Democrats has given enough hints to China that it will not be able to take the people of Hong Kong for granted, after June 1997.

The 1984 agreement, among other things, guarantees Hong Kong's commercial and civic freedoms for at least 50 years after the reunification under a 'one country - two systems' concept. Of late, China had been accusing Britain of 'subversive' tactics to turn the people against the government of the mainland, and threatened to scrap the election results once the transfer of power took place.

The question that awaits an answer in the next two years is: Will Hong Kong ultimately become an autonomous country?







## Respect for Age

**G**urumurthy lived in a village in the valley of the Gambhira mountain ranges. He could attend to any odd jobs quickly and efficiently. He was, therefore, in great demand. He never refused a request and obliged everybody to the best of his ability.

But he was getting old and was now fifty. Nevertheless, he was confident he could do any job easily. The villagers, however, thought otherwise. As he grew in age, they felt his efficiency was falling slowly. So, they did not repose in him as much faith they had in olden times. He would not be able to carry out any strenuous job that needed concentration and sometimes physical strength, too. So, they began entrusting such jobs to younger Manohar, who had just then arrived in the village in search of work.

Naturally, Gurumurthy was upset. He spoke to his wife Lakshmi about

this. More than harbouring any complaint at the turn of events, he was sad about his misfortune, and the absence of people's regard for him. They were once entirely dependent on him, but now they appeared to have some contempt for him.

Lakshmi tried to console him. "You're mistaken, my lord," she said, with a mild laughter. "In fact, the people have great respect for you. You're getting old; that's why they don't wish to bother you. I don't find anything wrong about it. Don't worry. Take it easy."

"Could there be any limit to one's capability?" remarked Gurumurthy. "Manohar may be younger than I. But can he work as sprightly as I can? Don't the people know this?"

His wife did not react to his remarks. However, he went about making this remark to whomsoever he met. They looked at each other





understandingly. 'It's surprising. He never used to complain like this before. Poor man! He must be feeling the growing age.' They, too, did not react to whatever he said.

When his friends also remained silent, Gurumurthi became sadder. 'Do they think I've become old and useless?' He decided he would take up any job and do it without any complaint.

One day, he was sitting with others in the house of the village chief. Manohar, too, was present. Just then, an assistant of the zamindar came there. The village chief received him with great respect. He addressed

everybody. "We've collected all details about this village—its size, number of people living here, the extent of each farm, their boundaries, the rivers and canals that irrigate the farms, and all other data. The zamindar is returning from town tomorrow. The data have to be given to him. There are three hundred pages. Somebody has to go through the pages to check and correct mistakes if any."

The village chief could not make out what the official really had in mind. "What do you want us to do about it?" he asked.

"I am told there are some educated, efficient people here," explained the official. "One of them should examine the text and make corrections if necessary. And I must get this back by tomorrow evening to be given to the zamindar. I specifically came here hoping to get your help."

"Is that all? Manohar here will easily do that work," said the village chief. He had a lot of faith in the young man. He turned to Manohar. "What do you say, Manohar? You listened to him, didn't you? You do that work; the zamindar will be pleased with you."

"Did you say three hundred pages?" said Manohar, turning to the zamindar's assistant. "If I've to check





the figures and correct other errors, it'll take a minimum three days. No, I wouldn't be able to complete the work in just one day!"

"I must get it tomorrow itself," the man insisted. "I was confident that I would get some help here," he added, disappointedly.

"If you don't mind, I shall do the job," Gurumurthy interjected. "And I shall have it ready by tomorrow evening."

"That's good!" remarked the assistant. "Now I remember. I had heard about you and your capability. But I was hesitating because you're old. If you're sure of completing the work by tomorrow, I don't mind your

doing it. And if you finish it by tomorrow, I'll be very happy, too."

Gurumurthy completed the work by next evening and handed the papers to the assistant, who took it to the zamindar when he returned from town. He was happy that all corrections had been carried out, and complimented his assistant, and spoke highly of him to his friends. Gurumurthy heard about this. He thought this was the proper time to stand up against those who supported Manohar.

"Now you all know, don't you?" said Gurumurthy, sneeringly. "It was all three hundred pages that the zamindar's assistant gave me for





scrutiny. Nobody had the courage to take up the work of correction. And who did it ultimately? I finished the whole thing in just one day! And I didn't take anybody's help!" he told everybody with a vengeance and pride.

One day, the village chief fell ill. The medicines prescribed by his doctors had to be prepared from some rare herbs. They could be made only by a doctor in Chakrapur. Someone should go to that place, give details of the illness, and then get the medicines made by him. Unfortunately, that doctor in Chakrapur knew only Sanskrit.

The village chief suggested that

Manohar should be sent to the doctor in Chakrapur. "He wants me to go all the way to Chakrapur?" exclaimed Manohar, unhappily. "The route is along the sea coast and the wind there will carry a saline taste. I can't stand that." He excused himself. The real reason was, Manohar did not know that much of Sanskrit to converse with the doctor in Chakrapur.

Once again, Gurumurthy offered to go to Chakrapur, where he met the doctor and sat with him till the medicines were prepared. He took them to the village chief, who was extremely happy.

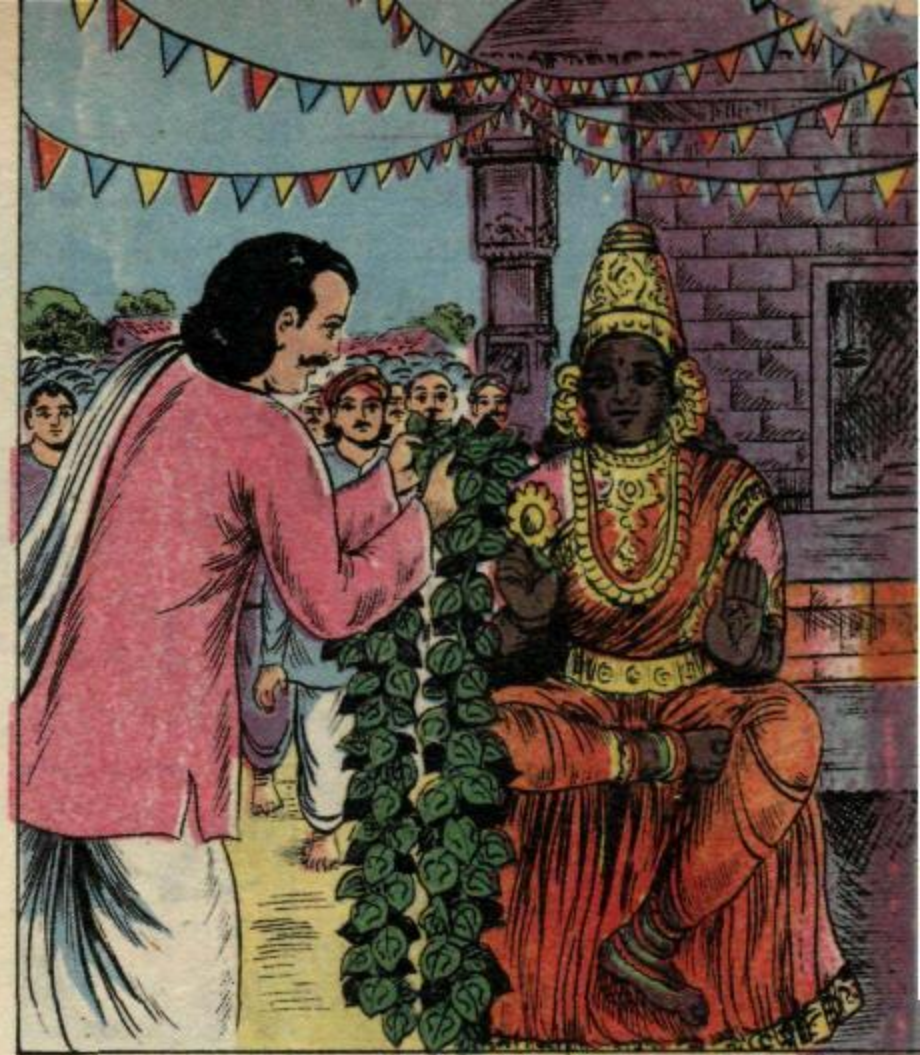
There was a temple in the village dedicated to the Divine Mother. The





annual festivities were on. One ritual was like this: After worship, the devotee had to go round the temple once, and should not sit anywhere for the next one full hour. To be sitting was believed to bring about hardship for the devotee and difficulties for the country itself. Another ritual was: the nearby forest had a peculiar tree, which had leaves of all shapes and sizes. The devotee had to pluck a hundred and one leaves, string them into a garland, and take it to the temple to adorn the idol of Devi. The next day, the garland should be taken back to the forest and hung on a branch of the tree. Many devotees found it difficult to undertake this ritual. But not Gurumurthy. He would unfailingly perform the two rituals during the festivities. This time, when he returned from the forest after hanging the garland, everybody praised him, and his wife Lakshmi was particularly proud of her husband that he could perform the rituals despite his growing age. Manohar, on the other hand, was nowhere near the temple. Strangely, however, he continued to be engaged by the people for doing odd jobs; and they neglected Gurumurthy.

One day, his friend Sivaguru of the neighbouring village came to see him.



He had a problem. There had been no rain for the past two years, and the people in the village faced acute water scarcity. The zamindar there did not offer financial help to dig a well or a pond; and the village chief, too, remained unconcerned, and did not think of mustering help from the people. The people's grievances and complaints fell on deaf ears. They did not dare go to the king as it was not so easy to catch his attention while he held his daily *darbar*. They had to wait for days together before they could go anywhere near the king and hand over their petition. Unfortunately, none of the villagers was capable







enough of presenting their case effectively to the king. Sivaguru sought the help of Gurumurthy in finding a person in his village to take up the cause of the neighbouring village and proceed to the capital.

Gurumurthy was peeved. Why should his friend search for anybody else when he himself was available to undertake the assignment? He decided he would not himself offer his services. He asked him to go and meet the village chief and request him to suggest someone.

Sivaguru went to the village chief and soon came back to Gurumurthy. "He mentioned the name of one

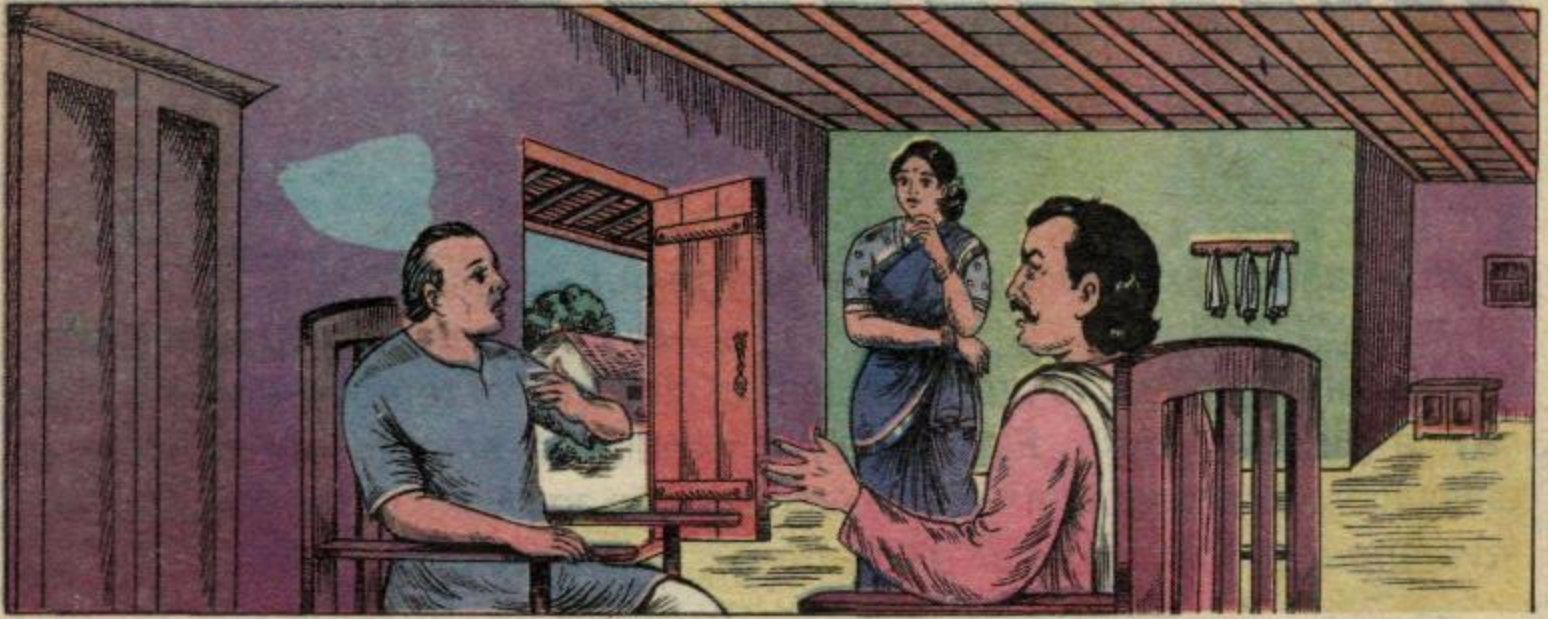
Manohar, and also told me that you alone would be able to persuade Manohar to undertake the job."

That was too much for Gurumurthy. He burst out, "Do you know that I looked through three hundred pages of a report in just one day and made all corrections? It was I who went to a doctor who speaks only Sanskrit and got him make a medicine for the village chief. Again, it was I who went to the forest and plucked leaves from a tree and made a garland of it for the Divine Mother. The next day, I went back to the forest to hang the garland on the tree. Nobody else came forward to do this risky job. I performed all these jobs easily and efficiently. It's strange that the village chief did not suggest my name to do the job and only wants me to persuade someone else to do it! If you so wish, you can yourself go to Manohar and ask him to go with you to your capital. I can't go to him, and I don't like that!" Gurumurthy gave him a piece of his mind.

Sivaguru looked at his friend in complete surprise. "The village chief was quite correct in cautioning me," he said resignedly.

Now, Gurumurthy was curious to know what the village chief had told his friend. "What did he tell you about





me, Sivaguru?"

"It appears, earlier you used to do any job, but would never complain however difficult the jobs were. But, these days you will do a job but would also mention how strenuous it is to carry it out. As he said, you're growing old, Gurumurthy. You must now take it easy."

Gurumurthy felt ashamed of himself. He now realised what kind of changes had come over him. He could not blame the people if they thought he was getting old and older, because he was himself complaining of the strain he underwent whenever

he did something. Whereas Manohar was willing to do a job only if he was sure he could do it. Otherwise, he would be honest about his inability and excuse himself. It was only aged people who would not feel ashamed to spell out difficulties and hazards – old people like him. This self-realisation gave Gurumurthy a new approach to life.

Henceforth, he thought twice before accepting an assignment. He never made any complaint to anyone. Naturally, people no more had any contempt for him. They respected his age.

#### **AWARD FOR CHANDAMAMA (Sanskrit)**

The Delhi Sanskrit Academy, at its Conference of Editors and Publishers of Sanskrit Newspapers and Periodicals in India on September 23, conferred on *Chandamama (Sanskrit)* its Honour Award "for its service to the cause of Sanskrit". The Award consisted of an insignia and a cash prize.



## How to Settle Differences?

*In what context can the phrase "to iron out" be used?*

**–P. Parameswar, Kusum Kuhari**

Literally it means, to press an item of clothing, or remove wrinkles from, say, a piece of cloth. Figuratively, it means to smooth out or clear up difficulties, disagreements. For example: *India and Pakistan held a Ministerial level meeting to iron out all differences.*

*Some articles have a guarantee period, and some others have a warranty period. What is the difference?*

**–P.V. Bhaskaram, Tadepalligudem**

Warranty is a written guarantee given to the purchaser that the manufacturer or dealer will make any repairs or replace defective parts free of charge for a specified period of time. Practically, there is no difference between warranty and guarantee, both of which simply mean assurance.

*What is meant by 'ribbon development'?*

**–Manas Ranjan Biswal, Durgapur**

When a chain of stores and houses spring up on a highway leading to a town or city, especially in an unplanned manner, it is described as ribbon development.

*Who is a sandwich man?*

**–Papu, Talcher**

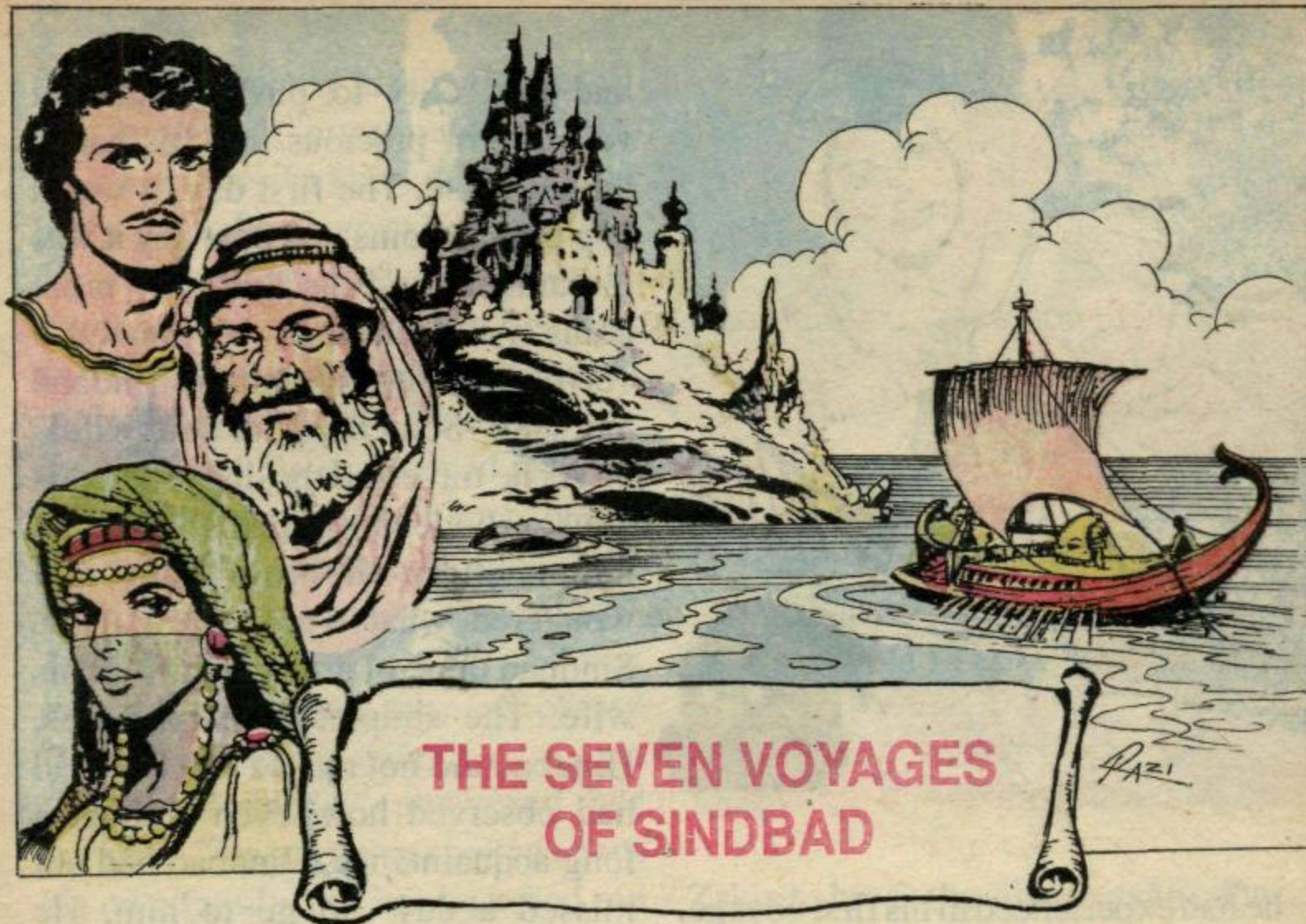
Someone carrying advertisement boards hung from his shoulders in front and at the back is called a sandwich man – as if he is sandwiched between the two boards!

*What is a kangaroo court?*

**–Rashmi, Angul, Orissa**

A self-appointed or mob operated tribunal, either disregarding or parodying prevailing principles of law is known as a kangaroo court. If there is a dispute among the prisoners in a jail, they constitute a court to settle it. In such 'courts', no point of law is quoted to reach a decision.





**H**indbad was once again left to wonder what had made Sindbad think of his wife and give him a gift specially for her. During his brief acquaintance and friendship with the famous sailor for the past four days, there was no talk of Hindbad's family. For that matter, he had no occasion to mention to Sindbad that he was a poor porter, trying to make both ends meet by carrying merchandise from one trader to another.

True, he had, while carrying a rather heavy load, taken time to rest

near the gates of a huge mansion, when he had passed loud comments about the great divide between the rich, like the owner of the mansion, and the poor, like himself. On hearing him, the gatekeepers had taken him to their master - Sindbad.

If he had really been informed of the unflattering remarks Hindbad made, Sindbad did not show this in either his behaviour or conversation with him. On the first day, he was ushered in when Sindbad was with his friends narrating the adventures







he had experienced in his first voyage. The next day he had gone to Sindbad at his bidding, and his friends had already turned up when Hindbad went in. The third day, Hindbad arrived earlier than the other friends, and till they joined them, he and Sindbad were alone, yet he did not get an opportunity to tell Sindbad about himself or his family - wife Zubeida, daughter Zohra, or son Zakir. And on the fourth day, he and Sindbad's friends had to wait for him, as he had gone out.

Every day, at the time of parting, Sindbad would give a hint to Hindbad that he should stay back till his friends

had left, only to push something valuable or precious into his hands with a smile. The first day, it was a bag of gold coins; the next day it was a diamond; and the third day more coins. And today, as he pressed a velvet bag into his hands, Sindbad had said: "Something for your wife!"

As he traversed the distance to his house, Hindbad recalled all that had happened in the four days and wondered what would have made Sindbad think of a special gift for his wife. The simpleton that he was, Hindbad did not realise that Sindbad had observed how, even without a long acquaintance, Hindbad had not missed a day to go to him. He attributed this to either Hindbad's eagerness to listen to his adventures or his desire to derive some benefit from these visits. He had also noticed that Hindbad did not show off in front of his friends with whatever he had given him; that meant he had saved everything or used it wisely. It was also quite likely, Sindbad had found out from his servants under what circumstances Hindbad had come to his gates on the first day. Evidently, Sindbad had carefully avoided any query about Hindbad's family.

As on previous occasions, on reaching home, Hindbad brought out



the velvet bag only in the presence of his family. It contained a pearl necklace! Now he knew why Sindbad had a gift to be given to his wife. The fourth voyage had seen young Sindbad take a princess as his wife and also lose her in a few days because of a fatal illness. Probably he remembered his short-lived married life when he recounted his voyage, and thought of Hindbad and his family.

"Did you say he gave this for me?" Zubeida groped for words. "Did you ever tell him about me - all of us? Have you seen his wife?"

"No, Zubeida," answered her husband. "He has never spoken about his own family, nor has he asked me about mine. Except for the slave girls, I haven't seen any other women in his household. Perhaps his wife is in *purdah*, and does not come out when menfolk are around. But today he was telling us how he was almost forced to marry a princess and how she died soon afterwards, and he was buried along with her! If she had lived, who knows he would not have succeeded her father, the king?"

Hindbad then narrated the whole story, which was listened to by his wife and children in rapt attention. "Abba, will you go to him again, tomorrow?" That came from little



Zakir, to break the silence as Hindbad concluded the story. "Your friend must be a strong man! Every time he meets with danger, he's able to escape! I want to meet him. Will you take me when you go?"

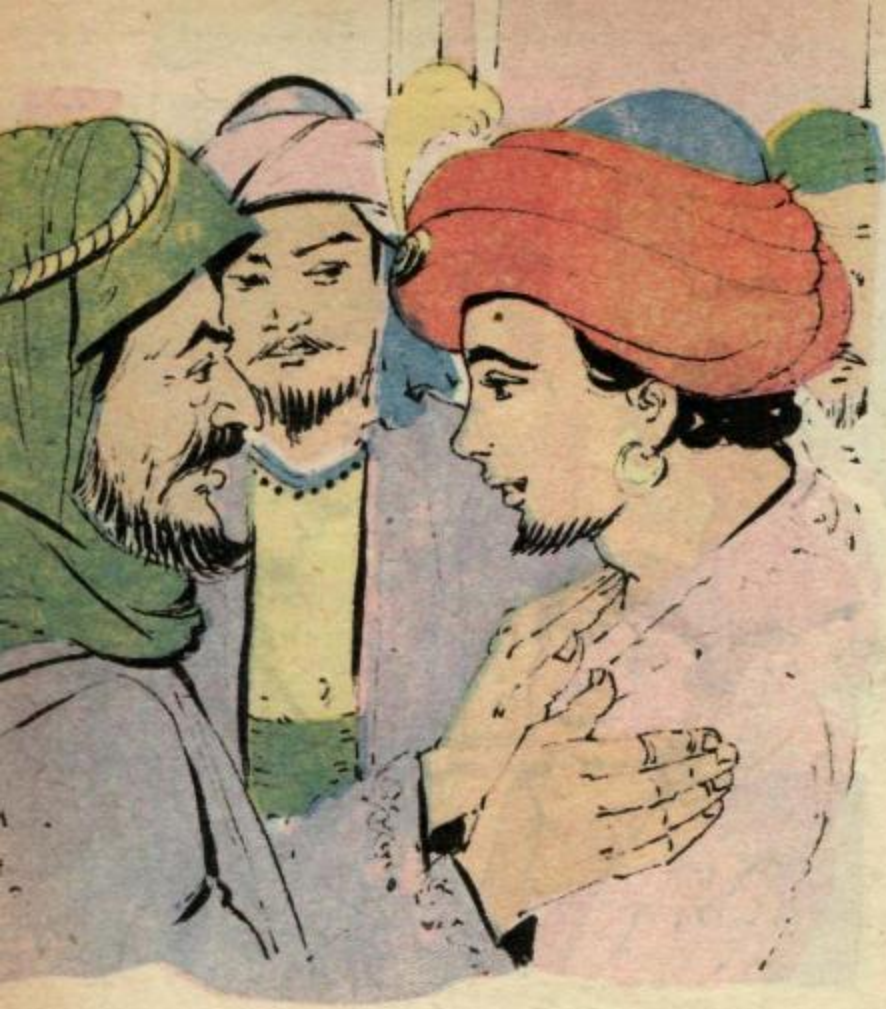
"No, I can't, my son," said Hindbad. "I must first ask him, and if he agrees to meet you, only then shall I take you to him, Zakir."

"How about a pendant for this?" Zubeida reminded her husband when they were alone. "Remember, you had promised me one?"

"Sure, I do," said Hindbad. "But a diamond pendant won't go well with a pearl necklace. Don't be in a hurry.







All in good time!"

Next day, Hindbad soon got ready and proceeded to Sindbad's residence. He did not hurry particularly; however, he hoped he would reach there before everybody else, so that he would have some time to be alone with Sindbad. But today, he had visitors, and Hindbad was asked to wait in an ante room, and not in the porch where Sindbad was meeting some traders. Was he planning yet another voyage? wondered Hindbad. 'I should ask him whether I could go with him,' he decided and waited for Sindbad to call him.

The visitors left as Sindbad's

friends began trooping in one after another. Sindbad received them and led them to where Hindbad was eagerly awaiting them. "Traders from China! They asked me whether I wouldn't want to exchange merchandise in China. I must find someone in Baghdad to go on my behalf. I can't be going there myself. I'm too old to stand the rigors of another voyage! They went away disappointed. But I can't help it!"

"That's a pity, Sindbad!" observed Hindbad in a hurry, before anyone else could make any remark. He was not sure how Sindbad would react if he were to say anything more. So, he kept quiet.

"True, Sindbad!" echoed one of his friends. "What our friend said is very true. You haven't been sailing for some time, Sindbad. You should seriously consider undertaking another voyage. Present-day ships are sturdy and they can go on long voyages, without touching land for days together. China? That sounds exciting!"

"Exciting? Could it be more exciting than seeing your vessel split into two?" said Sindbad with a twinkle in his eyes. "That's what happened in my fifth voyage. I must tell you all about it."

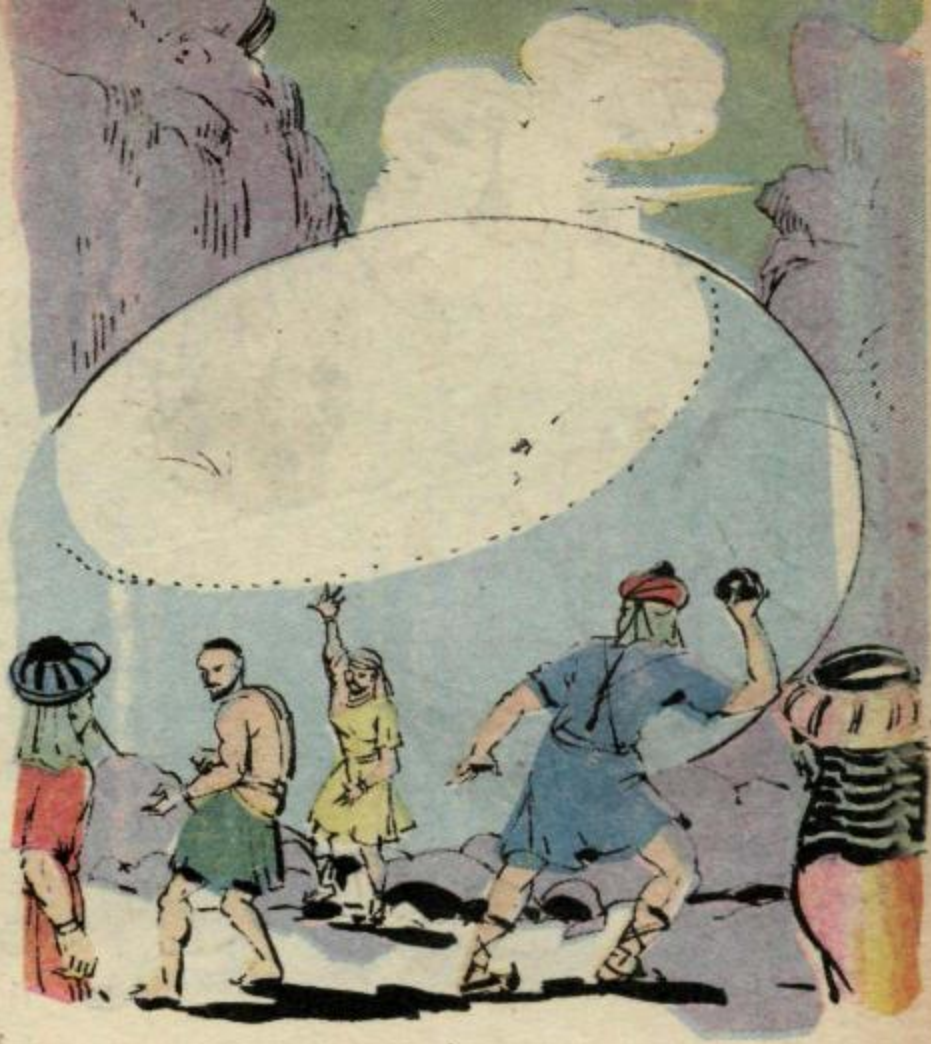




Half way through their food, Sindbad began his narration. "As I was telling you, though my mother had recovered from her illness and I went on a voyage at her insistence, she was unhappy that my married life was cut short and I had to escape from a cave where I was left along with my dead wife to meet my own doom. She was horrified when she learnt all those details. For several days she would not talk to me and would only look piteously at me, hearing out long, heavy sighs every now and then. One morning, I found that she had passed away in sleep. Poor woman, she wouldn't have got out of the shock that I gave her by telling her of my misadventures. For several days I remained at home, with no one to talk to, except my callers among whom was my father's friend on whose ship I had gone for the first time. It was he who persuaded me to go on another voyage. He had sold his ship to another and told me he would put in a word to him to take me aboard. That's how I undertook my fifth voyage."



They set sail when the wind was most favourable. Within a fortnight, they stopped at two major ports where they met with brisk business. The traders on board were very happy. As

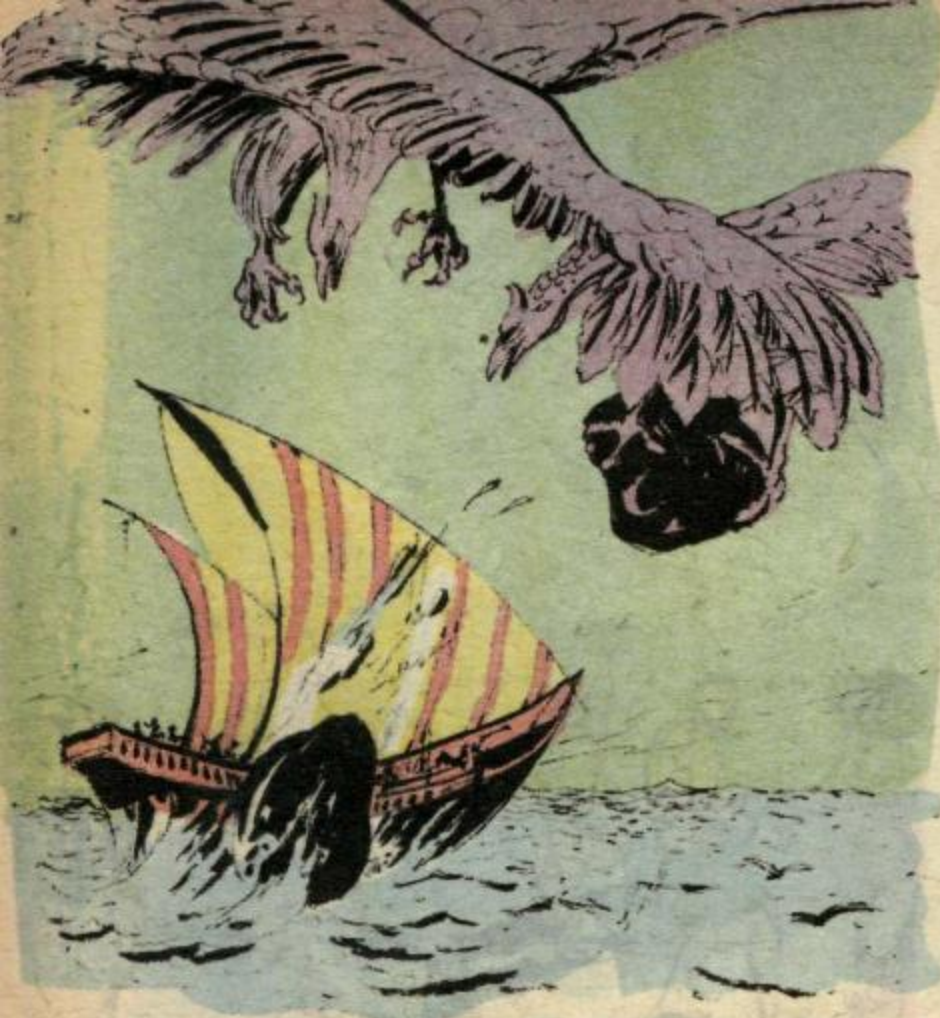


they sailed again, they found that they had forgotten to replenish their stock of water and food at their previous port of call. So, they eagerly looked for land, and when land was sighted they all got down to explore. It was again an island.

Sindbad was in no mood for adventures, so he and the captain remained on board till the others could come back with water and whatever fruits they found on the island. They took a long time to return, but when they came, they had interesting news to tell Sindbad. It appeared, they came across a huge egg—milky white—and out of sheer curiosity they broke it







open. Out came a fledgling bird and they killed it and roasted it to be eaten on board as they sailed forward.

From the description of the egg and the bird they gave, Sindbad recognised the egg as that of a roc—one of the largest birds on earth. And if it was a roc, he was sure, the mother bird would search for her little one and she might be attracted to the ship. And that meant danger for them! He went up to the captain and asked him to take the ship deep into the sea and as far away from the island as possible.

Evidently, the ship was unable to match with the speed of the birds. For, just as Sindbad had expected, they

soon saw a dark shadow fall over their ship. "The parent birds are over us!" shouted Sindbad. "Take cover!" The traders ran helter-skelter in search of a safe corner to hide from the birds. If they were to land on the ship, it would tilt and they would all be thrown overboard. They did not know what to do.

To their great relief, the birds did not settle on the ship. Instead, they soared high. All of them stood on the deck craning their necks to look at the birds. Before they realised what was happening, the two birds in one fast sweep came low and dropped on the ship two huge rocks they were holding in their fearsome claws. The first rock fell on some of the traders who were crushed between the rock and the deck. A moment later, a second rock fell on the ship with such heavy force that it broke the vessel in two. Those who survived on the deck now slid into the sea and were caught between the two halves of the ship and so could not swim away and were drowned.

Sindbad, who was also standing on the deck, caught hold of the railing and prevented himself from slipping into the sea. As that half of the ship slowly went down he let himself go off the railing and was thus able to

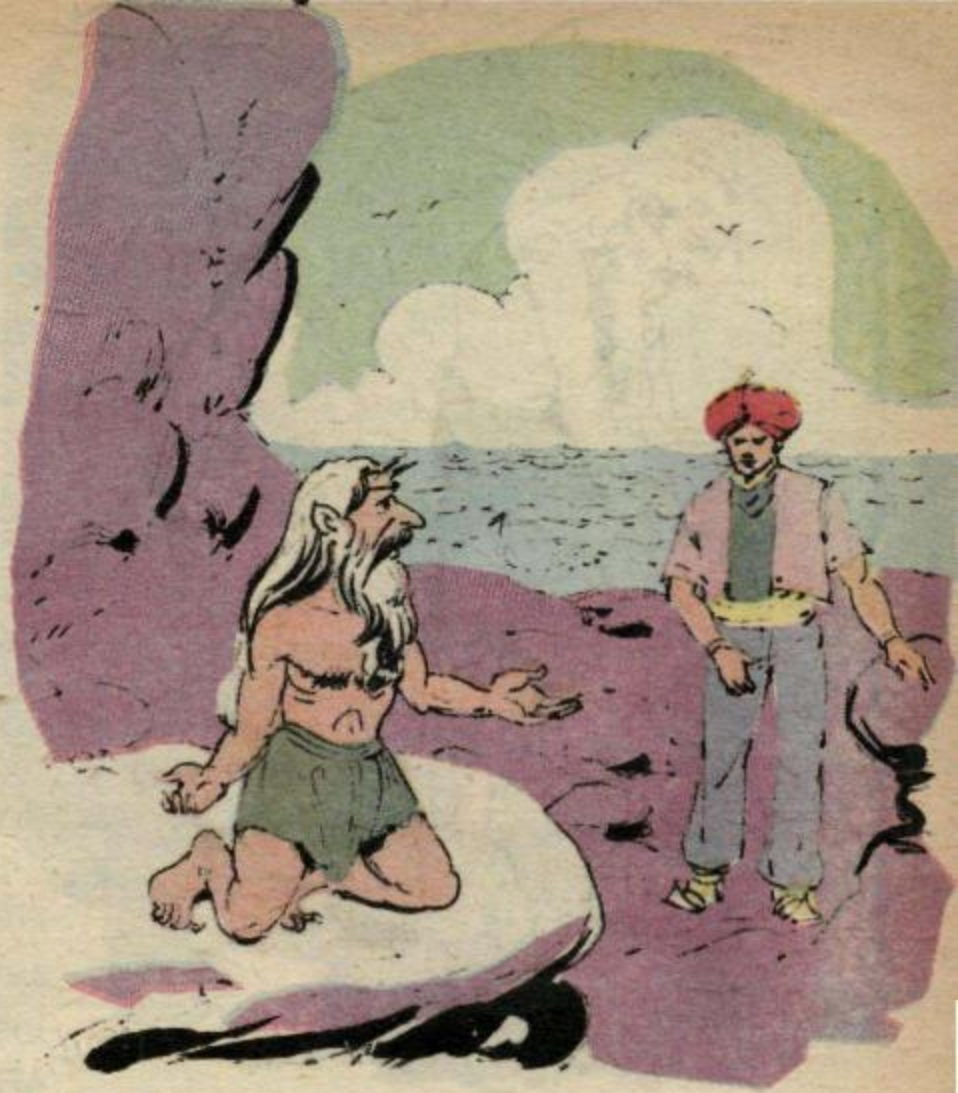


swim freely. He grabbed a piece of driftwood that floated near him and kept his neck and head above the water.

When the second half of the ship sank, it created some high-rising waves, but Sindbad had by then steered clear of the ship. He looked around and could not see another survivor like himself. He was surprised and sad, too. Once again, he had been left alone to fend for himself.

Sindbad did not swim, so as to conserve energy. He merely allowed himself to drift and keep himself afloat till a passing ship could rescue him. But no ship was in sight. The rising tide took him to the shores of what looked like an island. He threw himself on the green patch of land and stretched his legs.

He did not know for how long he slept, but shook himself to the reality of the surroundings. The land was not barren and at a distance he saw indications of a forest. He walked towards the trees, hopeful of gathering fruits to appease his hunger and some spring where he could quench his thirst. He found both. A satiated Sindbad once again stretched himself as by then it was nightfall and there was nothing else to do than sleep. But sleep would not come to him so easily.



He realised he was alone and he had to be alert lest he was caught unawares by any lurking danger. At the same time, he was dead tired, and before long he was fast asleep.

The sun was already up in the horizon when he woke up and began to walk through the vegetation. When he came to a clearing, he was greeted by the sight of an old man, bent and feeble, sitting on a stone by the river bank. Could he be a shipwrecked seafarer? Sindbad wondered. He went up to him and accosted him in a friendly way. The man did not reply but responded by nodding his head. For that matter, he seemed to







understand all that Sindbad said to him, but never uttered a word. In reply, he merely showed signs. Sindbad understood that he wanted to cross the river to gather some fruit and pleaded that he be carried on his back.

Sindbad took pity on him. Wasn't he very old and feeble? It was his duty to help him. He knelt on the ground so that the old man could get on to his back. After he sat on Sindbad's shoulder and made himself comfortable, sindbad stood up and began walking, slowly steadying his legs. He waded through the river which was comparatively shallow,

and on reaching the bank he bent down as low as possible so that the old man could easily jump off his shoulders. One minute passed; two, then three; yet there was no sign of the old man leaving his comfortable perch! Noticing his saviour's discomfiture, the old man began jumping from where he sat and at the same time gripping Sindbad's neck tightly. He was nearly choked to death. He could not suffer for long, and fell down, but the old man still had his neck in his grip! Like a horse-rider, he prodded Sindbad on one side, indicating that he should get up.

Holding on to a tree, he staggered on his feet with the load on his shoulders. He once again began walking. As he moved, the old man plucked fruits he could reach for and ate them all by himself, without sharing anything with Sindbad, who was now full of anger and bitterness. All the while he remained plotting how to free himself from the burden he was carrying. The old man would not leave his hold on Sindbad even when he lay down to take rest or to sleep. Days went by...

One day, Sindbad saw several dry gourds beneath a tree. He managed to pick up one and scooped up its inside to make it something like a bowl. Into

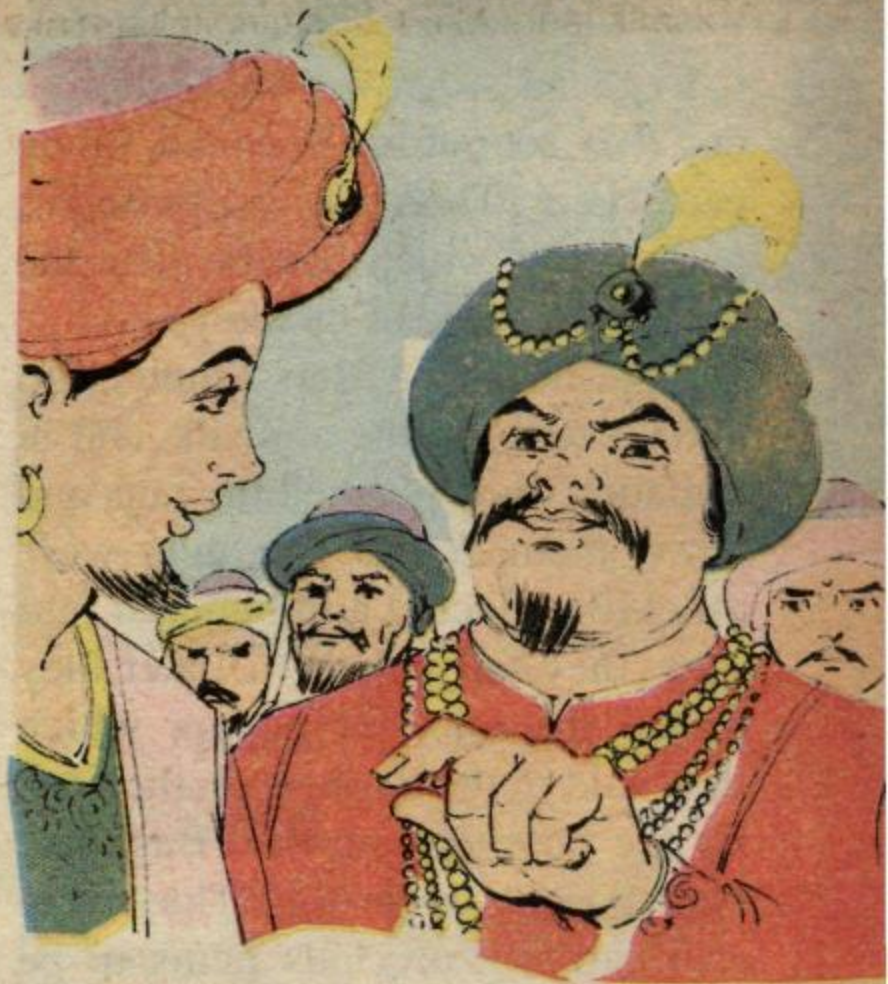




this he squeezed bunches of grapes he plucked on the way. When it was full, he left it in the fork of a tree to ferment. Two days later he returned that way and picked up the gourd and drank what was now wine. he drank a little; it tasted good. He forgot the weight on his shoulders for a while and began to sing and dance. The old man could not tolerate the sight and grabbed the gourd from Sindbad's hands and emptied the contents in no time. Soon, he too was singing and jumping from his perch. Sindbad now felt that the old man's grip on his neck was loosening. And before long he felt asleep on Sindbad's shoulders! He dropped the old man to the ground.

The joy of having freed himself from the old man was too much for Sindbad. He leaped and bounded towards the seashore. Fortunately for him, there was a ship a little away from the shore. Men from the ship were already on the island plucking fruits and collecting water. Sindbad told them of his adventure and escape.

"You mean to say you fell into the hands of the Old Man of the Sea?" they asked him in amazement "You're lucky! He does not spare anyone who comes into his grips. We're told that he strangled to death every one of them! We never knew that he lived on



this island. Come on, let's hurry before he wakes up and follows us." The men took Sindbad along with them and introduced him to the captain. "Oh! You're Sindbad? The sailor? Welcome on board, my friend! We're all honoured!" The ship soon set sail and reached a port the next day.

One of the merchants had by then become very friendly with Sindbad. He took him to a lodging and left him with some money to enable him to return to Baghdad, where he would have to go on camel back.

Sindbad made friends with some of the traders there and invited them





to Baghdad. A caravan was organised and they set out for Baghdad, all on camel back. Their way was through a palm grove which had become the home of a horde of monkeys.

Like the other traders, Sindbad too aimed stones at the animals, and in imitation, they plucked the nuts and threw them down. The nuts were quickly collected and bundled into sacks they had with them. Later, they traded the nuts for pepper which they sold in the markets on the way. By the time they reached Baghdad, their pockets were full. They were also carrying precious items to be sold in Baghdad.

News of the ill-fated ship and the loss of lives of all on board had reached Baghdad soon after the tragedy, and no one had expected to see Sindbad

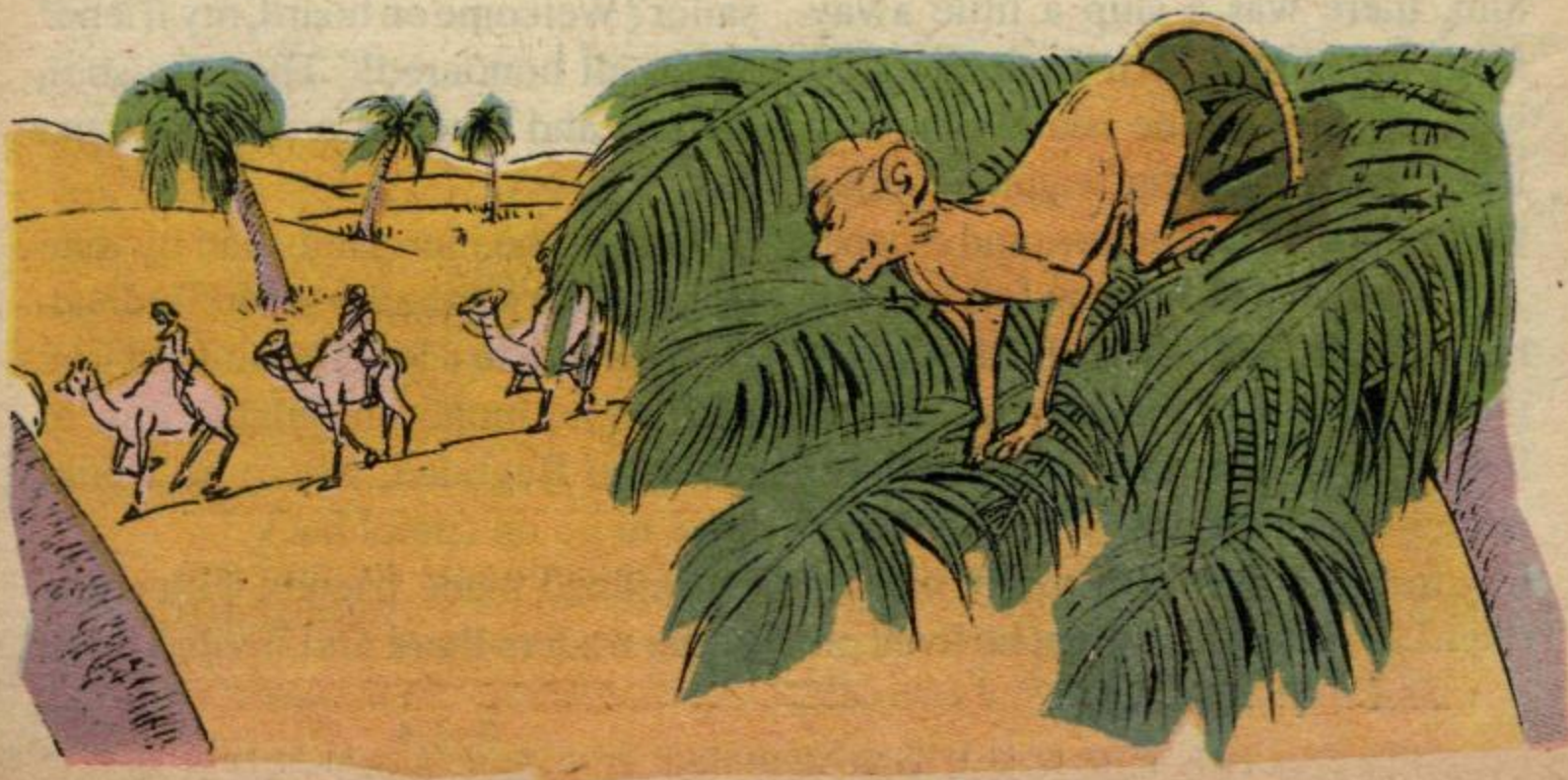
alive. So, his return was a matter of great rejoice. For the next few days, Sindbad's residence was flooded with traders, merchants, and ship owners. The happiest among them was, of course, his father's friend.

\*

"That was a narrow escape, Sindbad!" said one of his friends as he concluded his narration. "Still you went on more voyages. How come?"

"Well, that's another story and you'll hear of it tomorrow," said Sindbad with a broad smile.

As usual, Hindbad was asked to stay awhile and today, the gift was a finely carved trinket-box. The porter as usual checked his curiosity, pushed it into his pocket, and wended his way home.



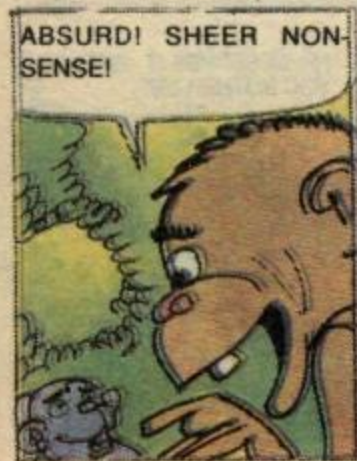
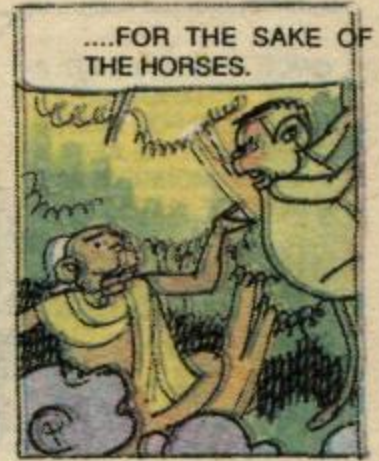




If a man loves himself, let him not commit any sin however small.

- Thirukkural





The poverty of a benevolent man is nothing but his inability to exercise the same.



LET'S GET OUT OF THIS PLACE AT ONCE, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

WE CAN'T LIVE IN A FOREST. WE LIKE THIS PLACE.



UNABLE TO CONVINCE HIS KINSFOLK OF THE IMPENDING DANGER, THE MONKEY LEAVES THE PALACE FOR A FOREST.



BLESSED IS HE WHO DOES NOT WITNESS THE DEATH OF HIS DEAR ONES, THE MISFORTUNES OF FRIENDS, TREACHERY OF HIS WIFE, AND THE RUIN OF HIS COUNTRY.



AND SOON THE OLD MONKEY'S PREDICTIONS COME TRUE. THE SHEEP IS HIT BY FIREBRANDS,



HE RUNS INTO THE STABLE. IT CATCHES FIRE.



THE HORSES GET SCORCHED.



MONKEYS WERE KILLED FOR THEIR FAT TO GIVE RELIEF TO THE HORSES.



THE NEWS REACHES THE OLD MONKEY. WHAT A HEINOUS OUTRAGE! IT BREAKS MY HEART!



IT IS UNFORGIVABLE. I MUST DO SOMETHING!



WITH A BURNING DESIRE FOR VENGEANCE HE WANDERS IN THE FOREST....



To give to the destitute is charity. All other gifts look like a calculated return.



....AND COMES TO A LAKE



I'M THIRSTY..... WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT DO I SEE?

THESE FOOT PRINTS ARE QUEER. THEY LEAD TO THE LAKE BUT NOT ONE OF THEM COMES OUT.



THERE MUST BE A MONSTER IN THIS LAKE!



SO THE CLEVER MONKEY MAKES A TUBE OUT OF A LOTUS STALK AND DRINKS THE WATER THROUGH IT.



WHILE THE OLD MONKEY IS DRINKING WATER, A MONSTER APPEARS OUT OF THE WATER



SIR! I ADMIRE YOUR WISDOM. NO ONE WHO ENTERS THIS LAKE SURVIVES.



I SHALL GRANT YOU A BOON! NAME IT!



I SEEM TO HAVE A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE VENGEANCE.



SIR! HOW MANY MEN CAN YOU SWALLOW AT A TIME?



THOUSANDS! BUT THEY SHOULD STEP INTO THIS LAKE!



The ground which supports a body without fame will diminish in its rich produce.





At the entrance of the Gulf of Khambat, a narrow, swampy channel connects mainland Gujarat to the picturesque little island of Diu. The island's name is derived from the Sanskrit word 'dweepa'. Diu, which is barely 40 sq.km. in area, was once a flourishing port. The Portuguese occupied it in 1593. It became an integral part of India in 1961. It is now a Union Territory along with Daman, which lies east of the Gulf of Khambat.

## Coastal Journeys - 2

### Gulf of Khambat

Text : Meera Nair ♦ Artwork : Gopakumar

The most imposing structure on the island is the Fort of Diu which was constructed by the Portuguese. The fort has the sea on three sides and a moat on the landside. The massive structure inside the fort now houses a lighthouse whose gas-flame glow can be seen from the mainland on clear nights.

The Alang ship-breaking yard, the largest one of its kind in the world today, lies 40 kilometres from Bhavnagar. Ships have expiry dates, after which, it is necessary to break them for safety reasons. At the Alang yard, established in 1983, ships from all over the world are brought for breaking. Because of the unusual movement of the tides and currents, ships can be brought right to the shore — something which is not possible in most shipping yards, where ships have to be moored at least 1000 metres from the shore.







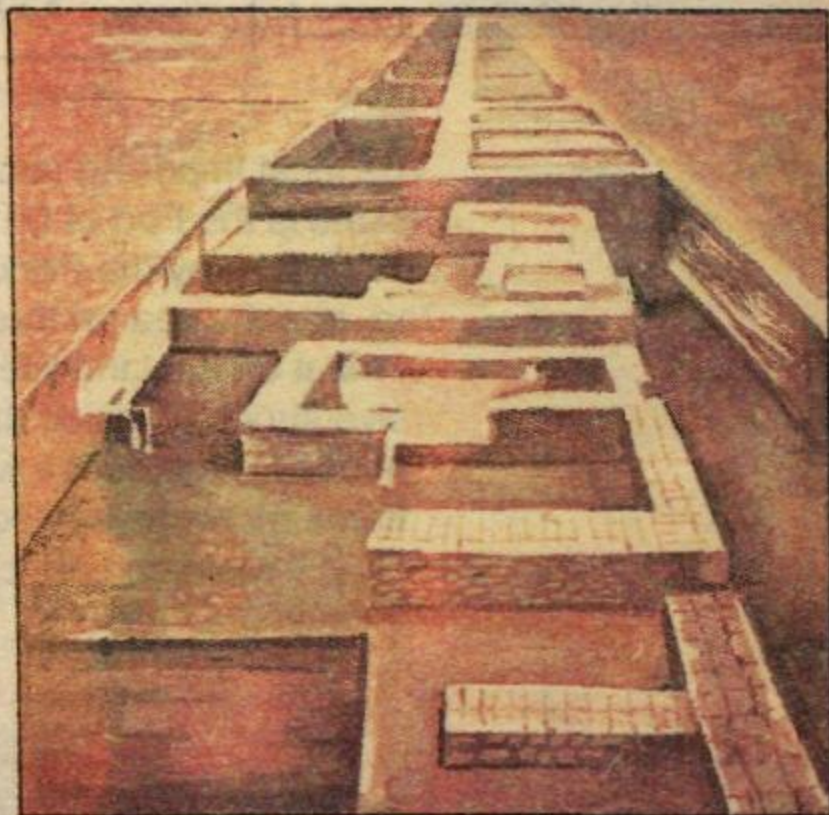
Northeast of Alang lies the tiny rocky island of Piram. The rocks in its southeast corner are embedded with fossils of elephants, rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses, horses, oxen, antelopes, crocodiles, fresh-water tortoises and gigantic fishes.

One of the places of interest in the Gulf of Khambat is **Lothal**, where archaeologists discovered relics belonging to the Indus Valley Civilization. Lothal was a port in ancient times. In the fourth millennium B.C., it had developed overseas trade with the Mesopotamian cities.

The remarkable feature of the port at Lothal was the water-locking system, which enabled ships to float even at low tide. Heavy floods resulted in the silting of the channel. Today Lothal lies several miles inland.

South-east of Lothal, lies the once famous sea-port of **Cambay** or **Khambat**, after which the gulf is named. The discovery of oil here has brought it back into the limelight. The oil in this region is spread over a vast area. **Ankleshwar** in Bharuch district is another place in this belt where oil has been found. The city of Khambat is also known for its small-scale industries of agate, a semi-precious stone, in great demand in the Middle East and South-East-Asia.

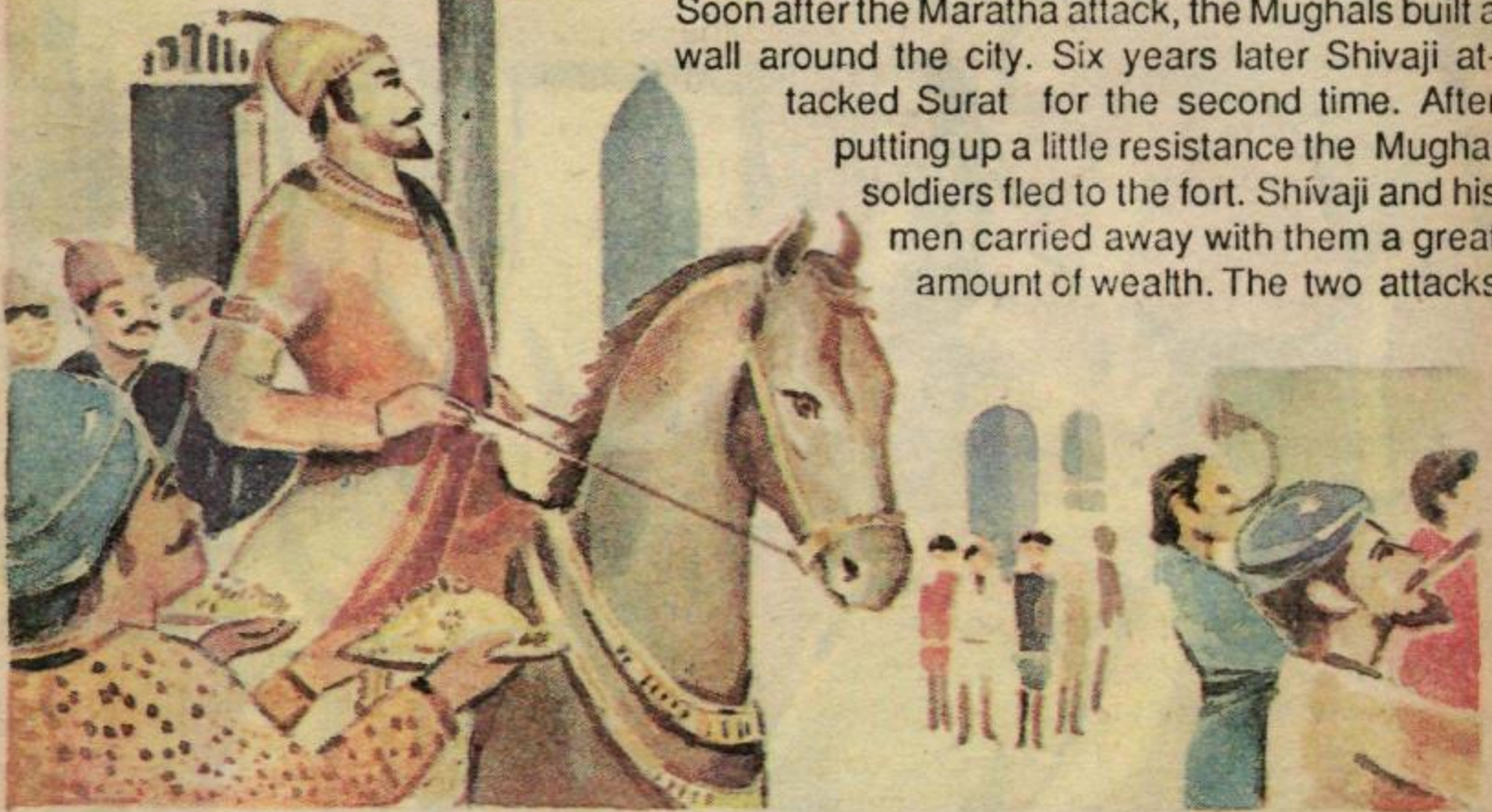
Only a few ancient ports along the gulf are identifiable today. **Bharuch** called **Bharu Kachha** in the past, was the chief distributing centre of western India. **Surat** on the Tapti river was an important port for trade and pilgrim traffic under the Mughals in the 16th century and was called "The Gateway to Mecca". The English, the Dutch and the French set up trading posts and factories here in the 17th century.





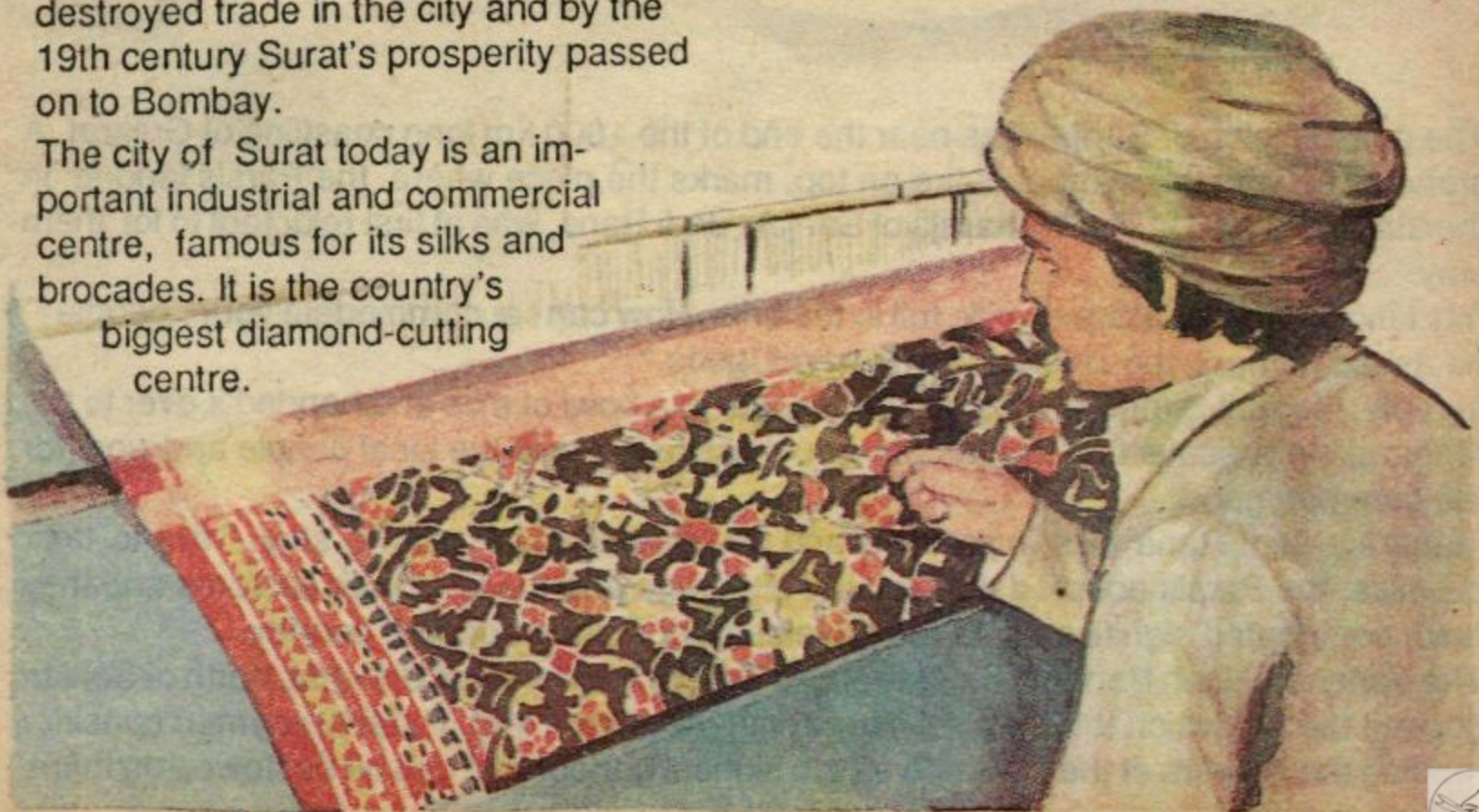
In 1664 the Marathas, led by Shivaji, raided the Mughal city in retaliation against a Mughal attack in the Deccan. Inayat Khan, the governor of Surat, shut himself inside the fort leaving Shivaji free to plunder the city. The British and the Dutch defended their factories.

Soon after the Maratha attack, the Mughals built a wall around the city. Six years later Shivaji attacked Surat for the second time. After putting up a little resistance the Mughal soldiers fled to the fort. Shivaji and his men carried away with them a great amount of wealth. The two attacks

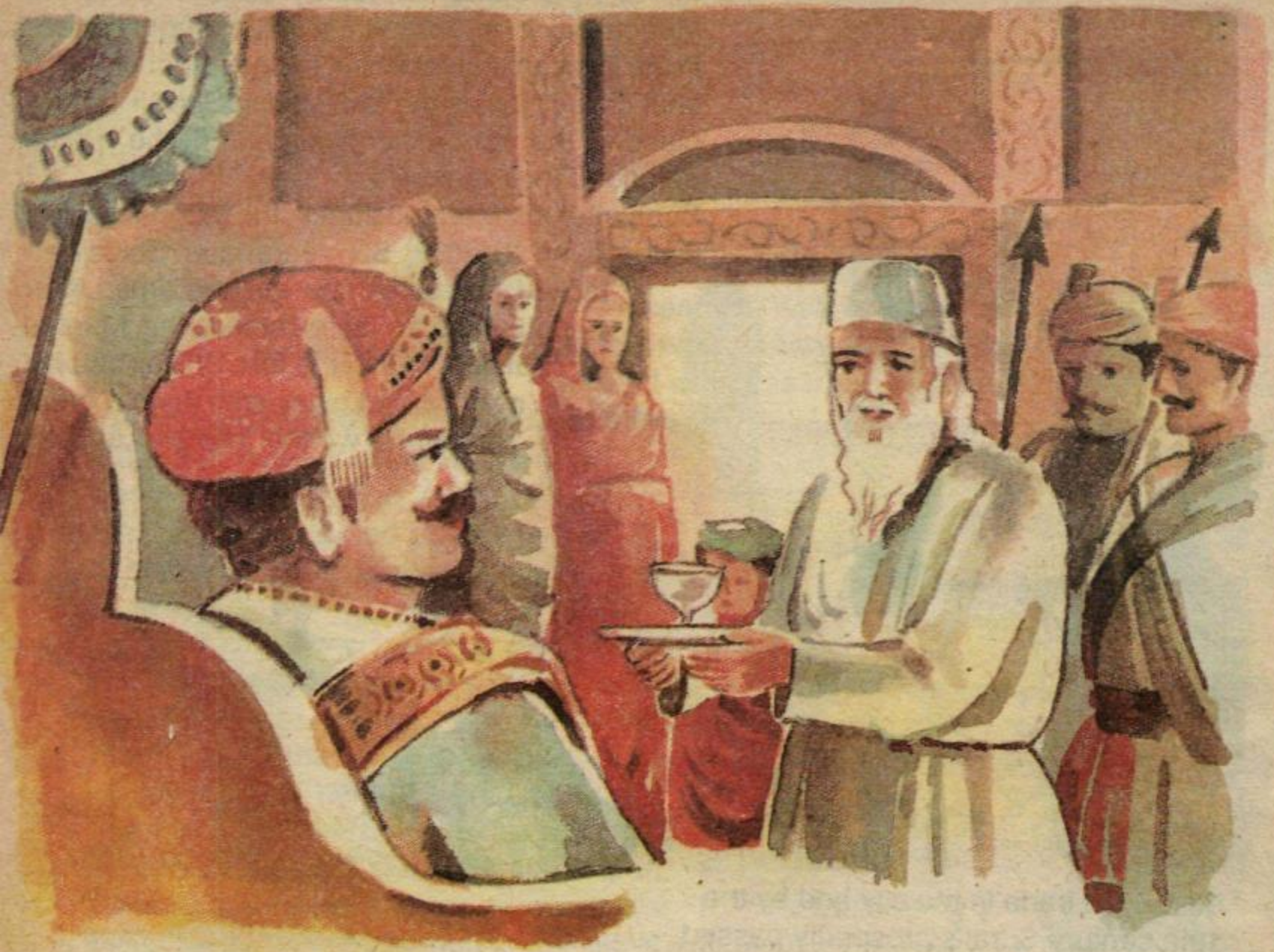


destroyed trade in the city and by the 19th century Surat's prosperity passed on to Bombay.

The city of Surat today is an important industrial and commercial centre, famous for its silks and brocades. It is the country's biggest diamond-cutting centre.







The coastal town of **Sanjan** lies near the end of the 1600 km long coastline of Gujarat. A stone pillar, with the symbol of fire on top, marks the place where the Parsis landed in the 8th century A.D. The Maharaja of Sanjan, **Jadi Rana**, was at first reluctant to let them stay.

"My kingdom is like a cup of milk, full to the brim. How can I accommodate your people?" he asked Meherji, the chief of the Parsi refugees.

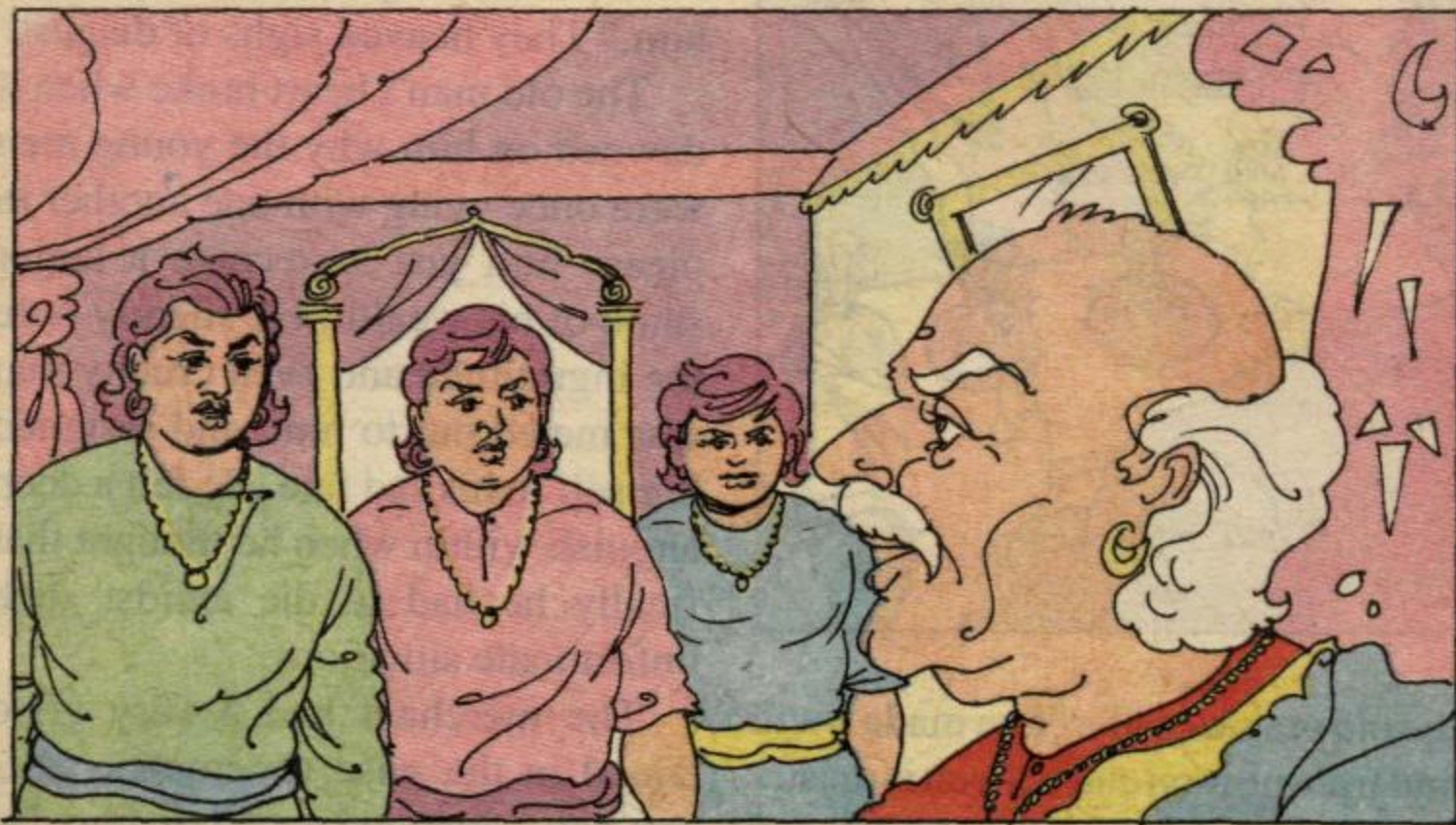
In reply, Meherji simply dissolved some sugar in a bowl of milk and handed it over to the Maharaja to indicate that his people would assimilate with the local people and work for the common good.

Maharaja **Jadi Rana** was impressed and he allowed the Parsis to stay. True to their promise, the Parsis adopted the Gujarati language and many of their customs and they have contributed significantly to the development of their adopted country.

The **Iranshah Atash Behram**, the fire temple built by the Parsis at **Udwada**, north of Sanjan houses the fire which the Parsis brought with them from Iran. Parsi clergymen consider tending the holy fire at the **Iranshah** as the highest honour that can be bestowed on them.



## THE MYSTERIOUS BAGS



Once upon a time, there lived a merchant. He was an old man but very rich indeed! He had lost his son, but had three youthful grandsons. They looked upon their aged grandfather with great care and affection, each trying to prove himself the most loving and worthy.

One day, the good old trader sent for his grandsons and said: "Dear boys, my heart is filled with gratitude towards God for having blessed me

with such worthy offspring. You've been so loving and kind to me all these years. Now I'm here before you, but tomorrow I might be elsewhere – in the mysterious domain beyond life and not on this earth to see the light of the day!"

"No, Grandpa, no! How can you think of leaving us so soon?" burst out the three, wiping off some forced-out tears from their eyes.

"Therefore, children," continued





the old man wearily, "I've made a will and from now on each of you is master of an equal share of my wealth and property."

The three young men bowed to the grand old man and touched his feet, thanking him for his most thoughtful gesture.

But the old merchant not only did live to see the light of the day the following morning but also for many more mornings. There was no sign of his departing for the mysterious domain!

By and by his three worthy grandsons' attitude towards him underwent a change. Alas, after a

year, when the old man was hardly able to sit up, they even said: "O this poor, old wretch! What a needless burden on us is he! We've to bear unnecessary expenses to maintain him." They heaved sighs of disgust.

The old man's heart broke when it dawned on him why the young men were once vying with one another to please him just to receive a larger share of his wealth! He silently bore the ingratitude and even cruelty that was meted out to him, and resigned himself to his sad fate. He felt a deep anguish within when he thought that finally he had to die amidst such unfortunate situations.

The merchant had a very good friend in the wise shoemaker who, one day, happened to call on him. He confided his woes to him and his companion promised to help him before he took his leave. Some days later, he visited him once again and putting down three bags before him, explained something to the old ailing trader in a whispering voice. He then left asking him to follow his instructions to the letter and assuring that all will be well.

No sooner had the visitor left than the three curious young men rushed into their grandfather's room and asked him what his friend had left





behind in those bags.

"Oh, these bags! They're but the most valuable and precious of all my wealth. I had kept them in the custody of my dear friend when once robbers began breaking into rich people's houses. But today, after several years, the poor trustworthy cobbler has returned them to me. Mind you, I've checked, nothing is missing in the bags," said the old man who, with some difficulty, carefully put them into his safe, locked it and tied the key to the string around his neck.

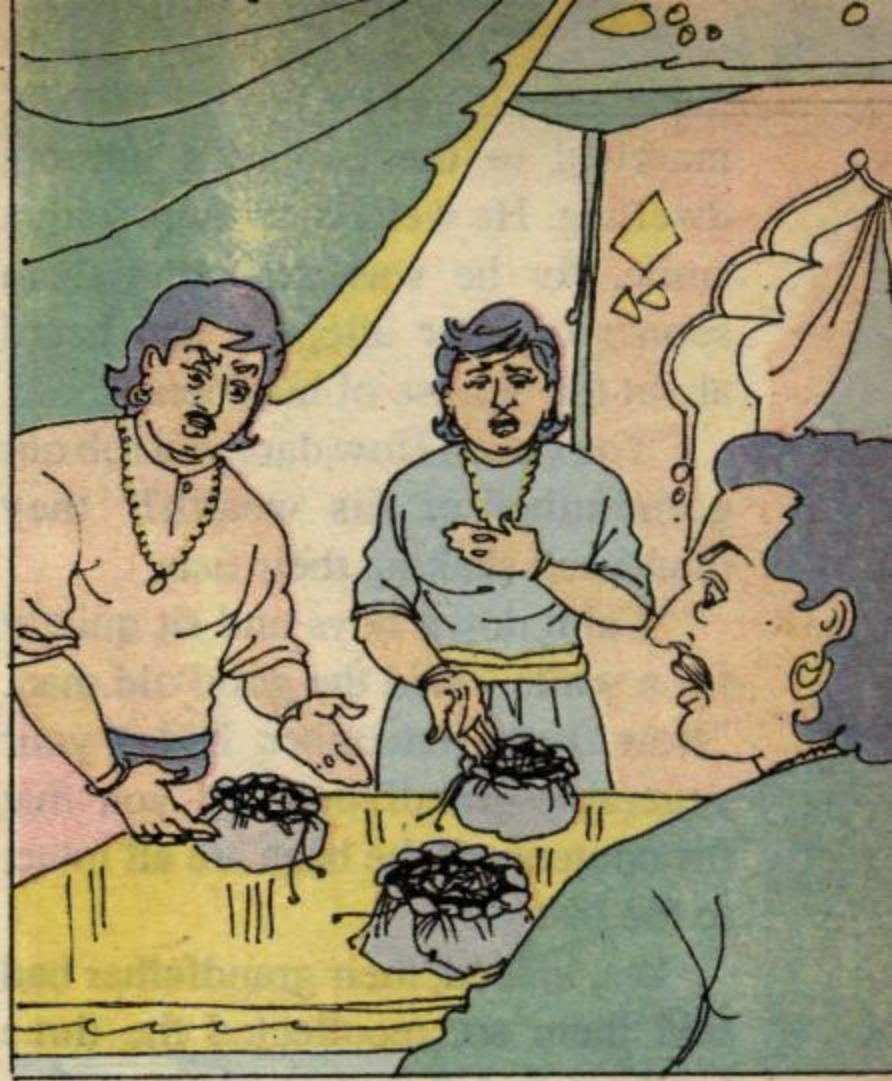
"Ah! The bags looked quite heavy indeed!" exclaimed the eldest brother.

"They must surely contain gems and diamonds," put in the second.

"No, no. They're something but not diamonds!" added the last.

From that day, the three young men treated the old man with a show of loving care and affection. In fact, they were much more gentle and kind towards him than they were earlier.

All went well for several more years. The old merchant was happy and sent his grateful greetings to his dear friend. But never did he open the safe and let his grandsons even have a glimpse of the most precious of his treasures. They did coax him time and again to partition the remaining portion of his wealth amongst them,



but he paid no heed to their words.

At last, one night, the old merchant peacefully passed away in his sleep.

After completing the last rites of their departed grandfather, the brothers lost no time in unlocking the safe. One after another they took out the bags and indeed they found them quite heavy! The eyes of the three young men glittered with greed and expectations. But alas, when they cut the bags open, what should they find in them? Not shining stones or sparkling diamonds, but pebbles and gravels of all shapes!

They fumed in rage and with the bags slung over their shoulders, they





marched to the cobbler's humble dwelling. He welcomed them with a smile, for he was expecting them sooner or later after he had heard about the demise of his friend.

"You cheat! How dare you rob our grandfather of his wealth?" they thundered shaking their fists.

"Calm down boys and sit quietly for a while," said the good old man. "Now try to remember, Didn't your venerable grandfather tell you that the contents of the bags are all intact to the last pie?"

Yes, indeed, their grandfather had told them so, recollected the three brothers and it was as clear as day. Then, what was this mystery?

"But, Uncle, didn't our grandfather also tell us that these bags were the most precious and valuable of all his wealth?" asked the eldest brother in a bewildered tone.

"O foolish young fellows! What can be more precious and valuable to a man in the last years of his life than the tender care of his near ones? Didn't these bags bring that back to your old weary grandfather?" questioned the cobbler very forcefully.

The three brothers now realised how mean, insensitive and stupid they had been, blinded by their greed for wealth and more wealth. They returned home, their heads hung.

—Retold by Anup Kishore Das







## Indiscretion

**P**rince Mangalsinh of Madhupuri returned to the capital after completing his studies in the *gurukul*. King Madhusinh heaved a sigh of relief. He was getting old and weak, and wished to free himself from the day to day administration of the kingdom. Now that the prince had come back duly educated, he would slowly pass on the charge to him. However, the young prince was adventuresome and appeared interested more in hunting and spending his days with his companions, roaming the countryside, climbing mountains, and crossing rivers.

Naturally, the king was disappointed in his son. He tried to reform him by making the wise men in the kingdom to meet the prince and give him words of advice. But all that was of no avail. Madhusinh soon fell ill and, one day, he passed away when Mangalsinh was absent from the palace.

The prince was surprised to see a silent crowd in front of the palace when he came back. As he entered the palace, the Minister, Somadeva, met him and greeted him as the 'King of Madhupuri'. Only then did it dawn on him that his father was no more and that he had to succeed him on the throne.

He did not very much relish the idea, but he allowed himself to be crowned king at a hurriedly convened *darbar*. After that he attended to the king's cremation. The rituals lasted three days and on the fourth day, Somadeva went to him to remind him that he had to attend the *darbar*. "Darbar?" he shouted at the Minister. "I've no time. I've already fixed up with my friends to go a-hunting. I shall think about any *darbar* after I come back!"

The Minister was shocked. He quietly withdrew from the young







king's presence. Mangalsinh also carefully avoided any talk about durbar. Whenever Somadeva went to him for consultation, he would impatiently listen to him and would not tender any advice. "Do what is best, and leave me alone!" he would say and quickly dispose him of. The Minister and the equally capable commander of the army, Vamadeva, somehow managed the affairs of the kingdom ensuring that the people were kept happy so that they would not have any complaints to take to the king or they would not be aware of any shortcomings in their king.

Meanwhile, Mangalsinh carried on

with his adventures, either in the company of his friends or many a time all by himself. One day, he started alone early in the morning. While hunting, he was led deep into the jungle in search of game. By then, it was noon and he was feeling thirsty. He now went in search of water. He saw a pond. He dismounted and went up to the pond, and quenched his thirst. He led his horse by its reins for some distance to give it a rest. Suddenly, he saw a little hut before him. It was situated in the midst of a garden, full of flowers and fruits.

The king wondered how he had failed to notice the hut, though he knew the forest like the back of his palm. But how did a hut spring up like this in the forest? Who lived there? Whoever it was, he or she was a true lover of nature and tended the garden with kind, sympathetic hands. He went round the hut. When he came back to the door, he found it open. A little away from the door stood a beautiful girl, and she was feeding a bird inside a cage, which now hang from the low branch of a tree. Presumably she must have brought it from inside. The bird seemed to have seen the stranger and twittered. Mangalsinh thought he heard the bird say "Welcome!"

It was then that the girl noticed the



intruder. For a moment she shuddered. The next moment, fear gave way to surprise. Anyway she stood still, but soon recovered herself. "You appear to be tired. Shall I bring some buttermilk for you?" she asked, rather unsure whether he would accept her offer.

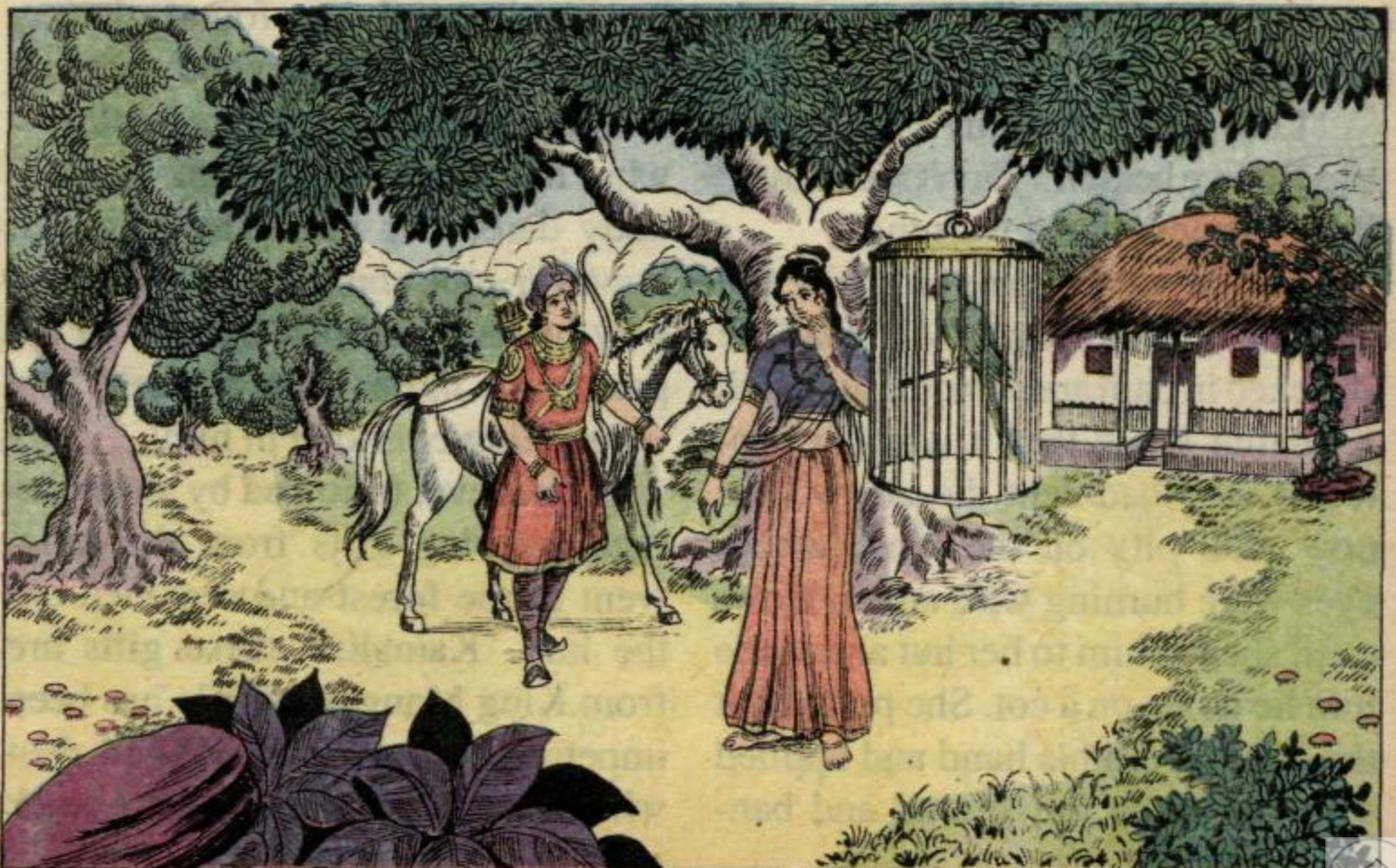
"No, thank you," Mangalsinh replied. "I was thirsty a little while ago. I saw a pond where I've already quenched my thirst. But tell me, who are you? Are you staying alone in this forest? I've seen many princesses, but you're more beautiful than anyone of them!"

The girl smiled. She now looked more beautiful. "I'm not alone here,"

she said. "I lost both my parents when I was a little one. Before my father died, he had entrusted me to a tribal friend of his. It is he who looks after me in this forest. I know something about the medicinal herbs and plants that are aplenty here, and I treat the tribal folk whenever they fall ill. They call me Kamalini."

"I'm Mangalsinh," he introduced himself, adding "I'm the ruler of this kingdom."

"Of course, that much I had guessed," remarked Kamalini. "I've heard your name, but I am seeing you for the first time." Mangalsinh was about to say something. So, she hastened to add, "You must excuse me.





The chieftain is unwell. He's inside waiting for me to take him some medicine. Let me go."

Mangalsinh was angry. Without giving due respect to the ruler of the land, this girl was more concerned about a mere tribal! He could not tolerate her insolence. "Kamalini! A beautiful girl like you should not be staying here in the forest among tribals. You come to my palace. I shall treat you like a Maharani."

Kamalini did not like his behaviour. She took a good look at him from head to foot. And without uttering a word, she turned to go into the hut. Mangalsinh blocked her way. "You dare disobey the king?" He then caught hold of her and moved towards his horse.

"Leave me!" the girl cried as she tried to free herself. "Don't touch me!" It was almost like a warning.

From nowhere came an arrow and hit Mangalsinh's hand. "Ah! Ha!" he shrieked in pain and took off his hand. Kamalini knew that it was her protector who had sent the arrow. She now took pity on the king, whose eyes were burning with anger. However, she led him to her hut and made him lie down on a cot. She pulled out the arrow from his hand and applied some paste on the wound and ban-

daged it. Meanwhile the tribal chief had come into the hut shouting, "Where's he? Does he call himself a king?"

"Forgive me!" said Mangalsinh. He now appeared quite sobered. "What I did was quite wrong. For a moment I was not myself, and did something really foolish."

The tribal had by then cooled down. He looked at Kamalini. She signalled to him that she was safe, and he could leave.

Mangalsinh got up as he felt strong enough to ride the horse, and returned to the palace. Ever since his return, he was like someone who had undergone a metamorphosis. He stopped going for hunting and was found gloomy most of the time. Everybody noticed this change and were anxious to know what had happened to him. But nobody dared ask him. The Minister, however, took courage and asked him why he had confined himself to the palace for more than a week. The young king confided in him.

Somadeva, followed by an entourage carrying gifts from the king, went to the forest and searched out the hut. "Kamalini, these gifts are from King Mangalsinh. He has been impetuous from his childhood. But whatever had happened here a week



ago has brought in a lot of change in him. In atonement, he has declared that he would never talk of marriage."

Kamalini's eyes now welled up. She wiped her tears and told the Minister, "Please inform the king that he can come here the third Friday from now, and take me to his palace!" She then ran inside the hut, weeping.

The Minister went back and reported to the king what Kamalini had said. Mangalsinh gave orders for a royal wedding. A palanquin was sent for Kamalini who, accompanied by her tribal protector, went to the palace where the wedding took place with pomp and splendour. The tribal was very happy that the charge his friend had given him had been duly entrusted to none other than the king himself.

A day after their wedding, Mangalsinh and Kamalini were closeted in their chambers. "You've broken your vow, my lord!" Kamalini

reminded him.

"True, I've broken my vow," agreed Mangalsinh. "You, too, had once rejected me, but now you're married to me. What do you say for that?"

"I had rejected someone who was impetuous!" she replied. "But when your Minister met me, I knew that you've changed. Also that you love me sincerely. That's why I agreed to your marrying me."

Mangalsinh was very happy on hearing that. He recalled how his father had died full of frustration for him, how he, without accepting anyone's advice, continued his adventures and kept himself away from the capital and administration of the kingdom, how he mistook Kamalini to be a simple tribal girl and tried to take her away by force. He realised that impetuosity is a sign of foolishness and indiscretion. A king should not be given to indiscretion.





# NEWS FLASH

## Just 46 years old

Yes, that is the age of our mother Earth, according to an international expert, Mr. Anwar Fazal. Did we hear somebody say "absurd"? What he did



was, he reduced the age of earth – believed to be 4,600 million years – to 46 for easy comprehension. And this he did at a meeting in Bangalore. He says, nothing is known about the earth's "childhood" and "adolescence". In fact, we know of only things that happened in the last four years! Dinosaurs and great reptiles appeared on the earth only one year ago; the earth passed through the ice-age just a week back; the *homo sapiens* (human beings) have been living on the earth only four hours ago; and agriculture operations are being conducted for just about an hour, while the industrial revolution is "aged" just

one minute! He capped his speech by saying that 500 species of animals became extinct in the past 60 seconds. How do you like that?


## To school again

It is often said that one's education continues till the end of one's life. That does not mean, one has to go back to school at some stage of one's life. Not so for some people in Brazil, a country in South America, where politicians have been asked to get back to school! There is a general feeling in that country that several politicians do not have the required knowledge and experience to carry out their duties. Recently, 180 legislators, mayors, and councillors began attending a course in political science, sociology, and economics. In India, Members of parliament who are elected for the first time have to undergo an orientation Programme that tells them how the Parliament - Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha - functions and how they can effectively carry out their duties.

## Pupil becomes teacher

Captain Scott O'Grady, of the U.S. Air Force, was a student at the U.S. Air Force Survival School in 1991. For the past two years he was with the Peace-Keeping Force sent to Bosnia, where his plane was shot down. He managed to survive for six days in strange surroundings, difficult terrain, and facing a lot of hardship and hazards, before he was rescued. He was recently asked to give lectures to nearly 150 Instructors – some of them his own – of the Air Force School, teaching them the strategies he adopted to keep himself alive.





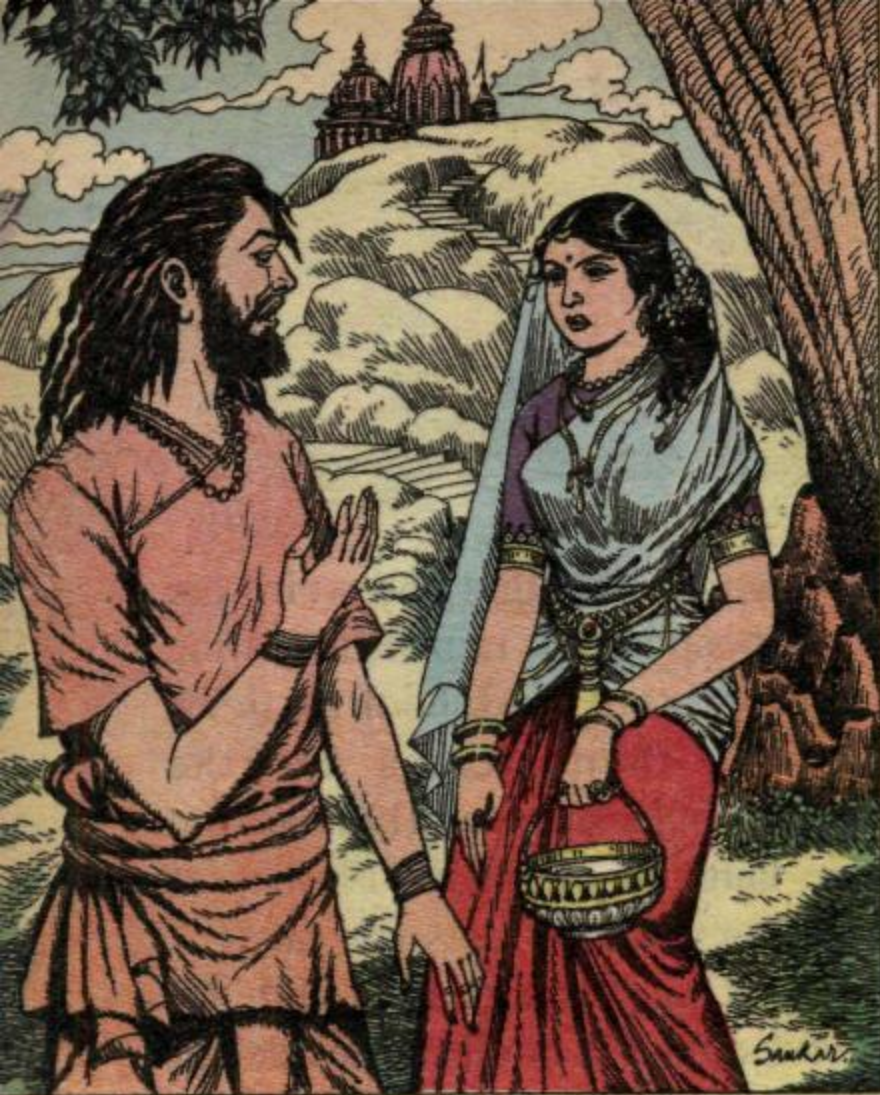
New Tales of King Vikram and the Vampire

## A Promise Not Kept

**D**ark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite, as if you wish to achieve something. I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. You seem to be adamant. A majority of the people are only worried about their own happiness, once they achieve their ambition, they'll forget everything else, even what they would have promised earlier. We have a good example of that in Queen Manonmani





of Mandarapuri. I shall tell you her story to easen the weight you're carrying." The vampire then began his narration. The king knew that the vampire would have some questions to pose to him, and he would have to answer all of them.

Madanasen was the King of Mandarapuri. Manonmani was his queen. They had been married for twelve long years, still they were not blessed with a child. There was no special puja that the queen had not done; there was no measure of austerity that she had not observed. She abstained from taking food on Mondays, walked barefoot to the

Kartikeya temple and offered special worship, taking the *aarti* herself. On her way back from the temple, she would place a bowl of milk at the foot of the snake-pit beneath the banyan tree and circumambulate it before going back to the palace. Such was her devotion and determination.

One day, she asked the *pujari*, "O revered one! I've been going through all this penance for almost three hundred Mondays, yet the Lord has not taken pity on me. Why O why? Won't He bless me at least now?" cried Queen Manonmani pathetically.

"Be patient, your majesty," pleaded the priest. "For everything there is a time, an auspicious time. The Lord will certainly bless you, O Queen, and put an end to your agony." He consoled her.

'Wonder when He's going to bless me!' said Manonmani to herself, heaving a sigh. She then went round the snake-pit as was her usual practice.

"Manonmani! Come here!" came a loud command from somewhere.

The queen turned to where she thought the voice had come from. A little away sat a *sanyasi*. He had unkempt knotted hair and wore a beard and a tattered dress. "Manonmani! I am aware that you've been observing austerities to be blessed with a child.



See! I've heard your prayers and have now come to end your agony and anxiety."

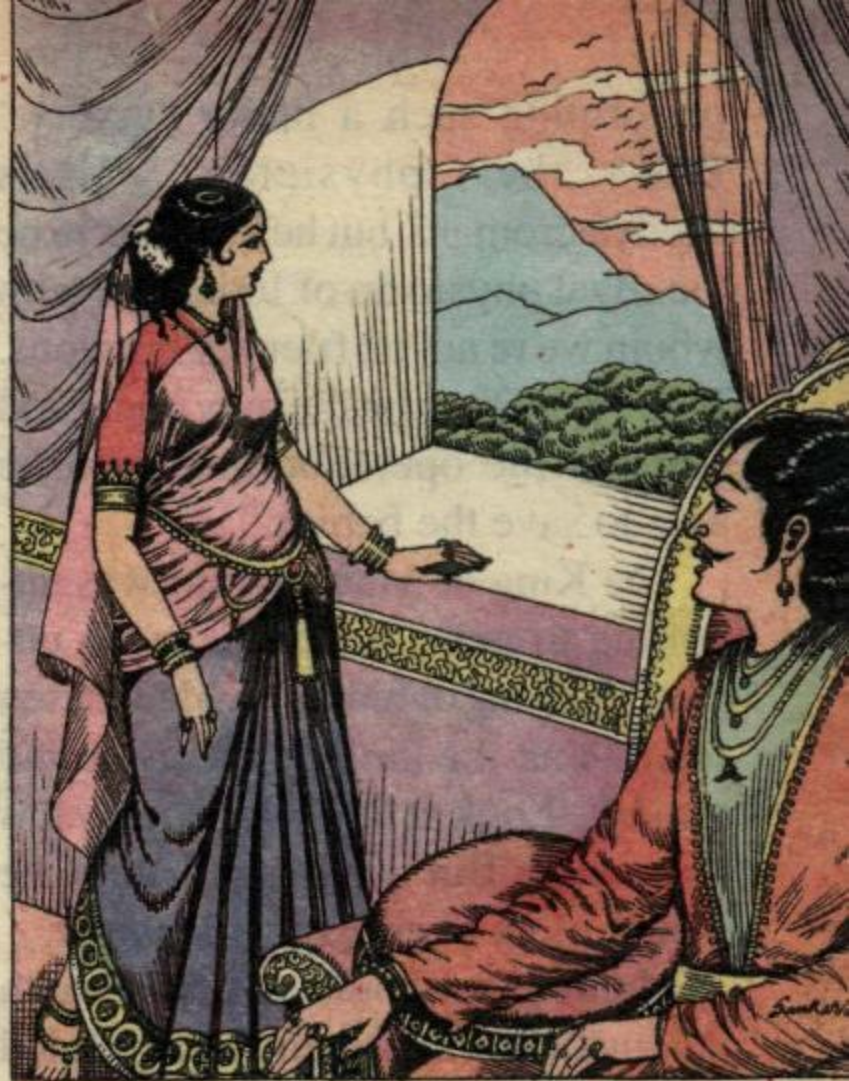
Manonmani took him to be not any ordinary sanyasi, but someone divine to remove all her worries and grief. She prostrated before him. "Swami! Do bless me and grant me my wish!"

The sanyasi pointed to her a bag lying near him. "You'll find bananas inside," he said. "Take two of them and eat them; your desire will be fulfilled!"

The queen opened the bag and looked inside. Some of the plantains were short and thin; some others were of a big size. She thought, if she were to eat a big banana, she might be blessed with a chubby, healthy child. She searched for the biggest plantain in the bunch and picked up a twin one and ate it.

The sanyasi was keenly watching her action. He smiled at her, picked up his bag and left the place without uttering anything more.

Manonmani returned to the palace and hurried to the king's chambers to tell him of all that had happened. Madanasen listened to her vivid description and said smilingly, "All that the sanyasi told you was only to pacify you. Somehow I can't believe his words!"



Some days later, the court physician met Madanasen after a routine examination of Manonmani and told him that the queen would soon become a mother. The king was surprised. In course of time, Manonmani delivered of twins. But like the double banana that she had eaten, the babies were joined with each other. They could be separated only by surgery, opined the court physician. And it had to be performed within the first six months.

The king told the royal physician that he need not wait for all the six months; if possible the surgery should be done at the earliest. "There's only one person who is capable of





performing such a major surgery," said the physician. "He's Vaidyasiromani, but he happens to be the royal physician of Indragiri, with whom we're not on friendly relations. If you send for him, he may come and perform the operation and we'll be able to save the babies."

The King of Mandarapuri was unwilling to make a request to his enemy, the King of Indragiri. Madanasen feared that the king might sneer and remark, 'Look at that! Our enemy has two sons! But what use?' And he would gloat over his predicament.

Manonmani could not agree with her husband's argument. She pleaded with him to request the King of

Indragiri to release Vaidyasiromani. But Madanasen flatly refused to write such a letter. The queen realised that there was no use pleading with the king any more, and decided to go to Indragiri herself and seek out Siromani and make a personal appeal to him to save her babies.

She took the court physician into confidence and asked him to look after the babies. She then went to King Madanasen and told him that she wished to visit her birth-place and sought his permission to leave the palace. And she went straight to Indragiri and searched for Vaidyasiromani.

Siromani, who was a bachelor and staying alone, was cooking food when





Queen Manonmani reached his place. He heard a knock on the door and went and opened it. On seeing him, Manonmani fell at his feet and pleaded piteously: "I'm coming from afar. Please save my babies!"

"Take it easy," said Vaidyasiromani. "You said you're coming from afar. So, first eat something and then tell me all about your problem." He took her to the kitchen and served her food. After she had eaten, he listened to her woes. "Don't worry. Tell me from where you're coming. I shall come there and perform surgery to separate the babies."

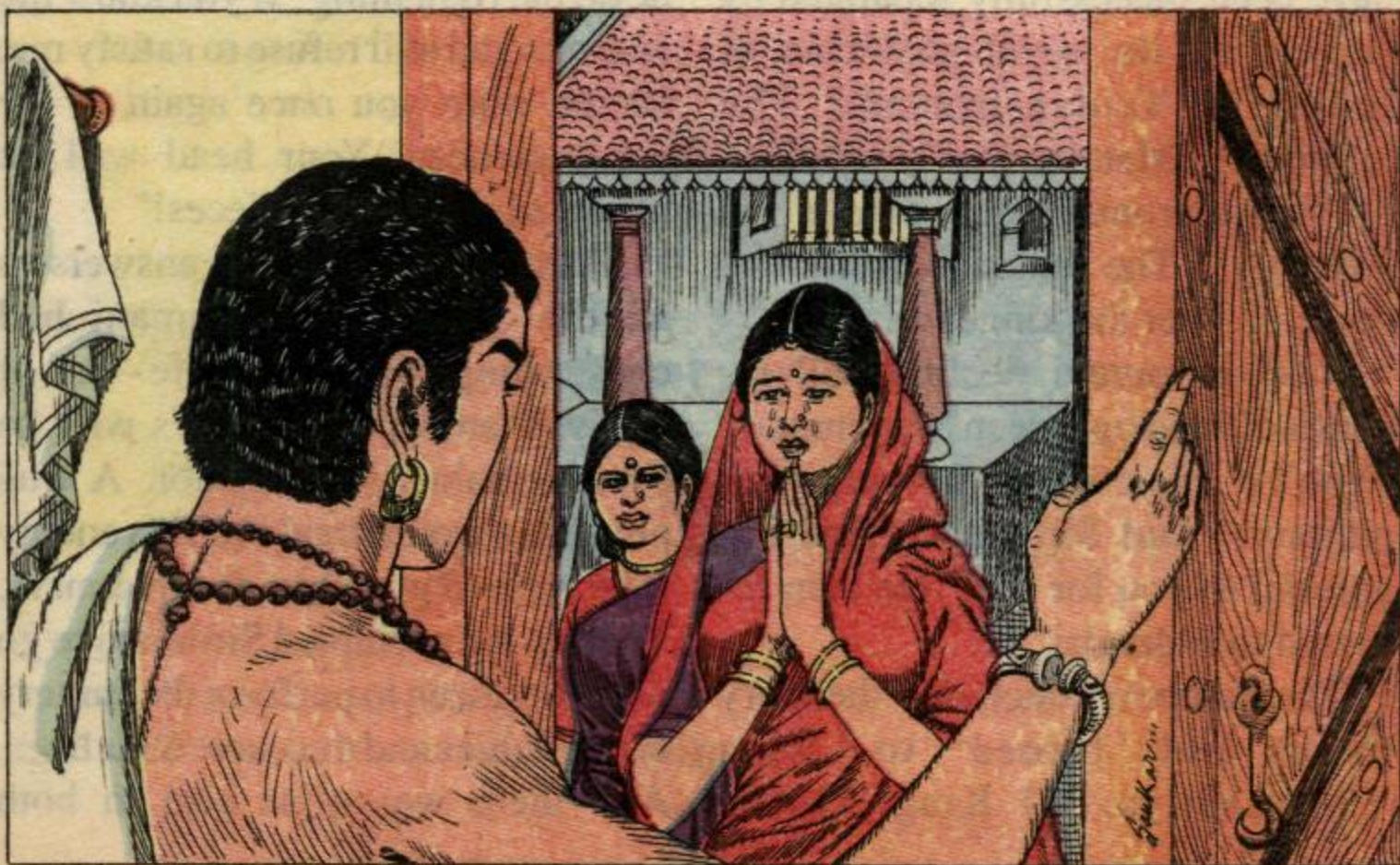
"I am from Mandarapuri; I am the Queen!" she introduced herself.

Vaidyasiromani appeared quite shocked. "If I come to Mandarapuri, on my return I would be beheaded and my head would be spiked on the main gates of the Indragiri fort! You know that well, don't you?"

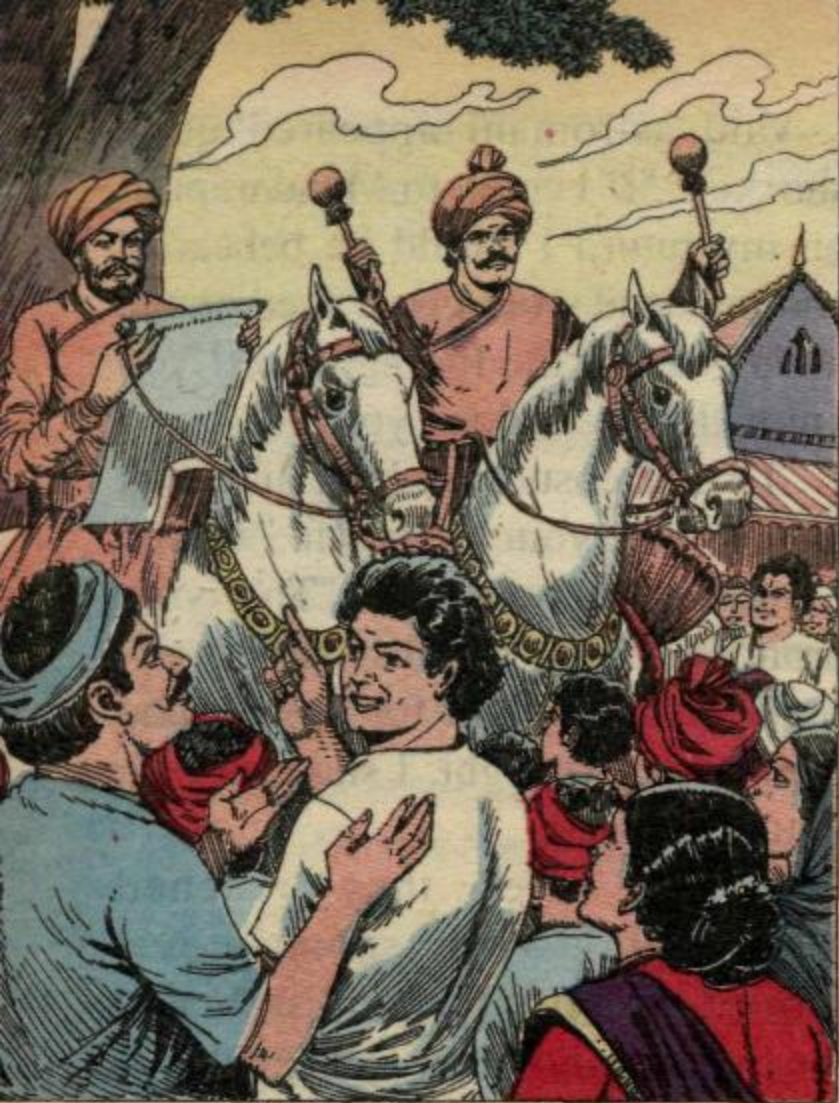
"I shall ensure nothing like that happens and your life is safe," Queen Manonmani assured him. "This is my promise. Please don't disappoint me!"

Siromani thought for a while and then said: "All right, I shall go with you. Come on!"

A day after they reached Mandarapuri, Vaidyasiromani performed the operation and separated the babies, who remained healthy. A public announcement was heard: "The







twins of the King of Mandarapuri have been successfully separated by surgery by the royal physician of Indragiri, Vaidyasiromani! The kingdom of Mandarapuri is beholden to Vaidyasiromani and extolls his dexterity!" The announcement was made all over the kingdom.

Vaidyasiromani declined all rewards offered by Queen Manonmani. "You've done me a favour, your majesty!" said Siromani. "And I'm grateful to you for life." He then returned to Indragiri.

The vampire concluded the story there and turned to King Vikramaditya. "O King! Queen

Manonmani gave a promise to Vaidyasiromani that she would ensure his life was safe when he returned to Indragiri. Did she fulfil that promise? Instead, she had announcements made all over the kingdom of his achievement and the kingdom's gratitude to him. Don't you think this would have brought more harm to him than fame? Didn't she realise that the announcement, which might even reach Indragiri, would only augment his fear that he would be beheaded because of the enmity between the two kingdoms? Despite this possibility, Vaidyasiromani went all out to express his gratitude to the queen and did not protest against her action. Did he do the right thing? If you know the answers and still refuse to satisfy me, let me warn you once again of the consequences. Your head will be blown to a thousand pieces!"

Vikramaditya had the answers to all the questions. "Siromani had chosen his profession for life – that of a physician for ever. That's why he even remained a bachelor. A true physician would treat even his enemy if he were to go to him for treatment. That's what prompted Siromani to go with the queen to perform the surgery on the babies and thus save their lives. And there was none else in both







kingdoms who was capable of performing such a risky operation. He was already famous in Indragiri. He would now be well known in Mandarapuri also. As such if he were to be punished for helping an enemy of Indragiri, he would only become a martyr to the profession and duty of physicians. When that was the case, the King of Indragiri would not be foolish enough to behead him. Not only that. He was well aware that if he were to punish Vaidyasiromani, then the King of Mandarapuri would be joined by kings friendly to him in declaring a war against Indragiri. He would wish to avoid anything like

that. He would also not want to alienate his subjects, to make them rise in revolt against him. Queen Manonmani could foresee all this and then decided to publicly praise Vaidyasiromani, who recognised the wisdom and intelligence of the queen and expressed his gratitude to her for her action, resulting in greater fame for him. So, the actions of both the queen and Vaidya were correct."

The vampire knew that the king had outwitted him once again. He flew back to the ancient tree carrying the corpse along with him. And Vikramaditya drew his sword and followed the vampire.

***The sign of good conduct are the absence of envy, patience, quietude, contentment, sweet speech, and the giving up of passion and anger.***

***—Mahabharata***



# SPORTS

YESTERDAY  
TODAY  
TOMORROW

## 85 years ago

The most ancient park in the U.S.A. is the Komisky Park in Chicago. The place is famous for another reason as well. It saw the birth of the White Socks Baseball Team—one of the most successful teams in that country. The team played its first game in the Park on July 1, 1910.

## Computer disallows a goal

The final of the 1966 World Cup football was being played in the Wembley Stadium in England, between England and Germany. They were level at 2 - 2, when extra time was granted. In the 12th minute, Geoff Hurst scored the hat-trick. But was it a goal? Doubts were raised. The referee consulted the Russian linesman and then awarded the goal to England. Hurst scored one more goal and won the Cup for England. Almost 30 years later, computer experts at Oxford University, who made a thorough video analysis, using a 3-dimensional projection, have come to the conclusion that the ball had landed one inch *outside* the goal line. Listen to Uwe Seeler, who was Germany's prolific 1966 World Cup striker: "I've said for years that it wasn't a goal... I was certain it didn't go in.. But you've to live with the referee's decision. Besides, England deserved to win the Cup." That's real sportsmanship.

## World rankings

Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand could not win the chess championship; he is young and he can still make another try. But he has a world ranking. Like him many other Indians have – in Billiards, Cricket, Golf, to name just a few disciplines. Added to the list of games now is Carroms! Maria Irudayam and G.Revathi, both of India, have been ranked Number One in the men's and women's sections respectively, after they won the titles at the Second World Carrom Championship in Colombo on October 15. The No.2 place has been given to R. Arokiaraj and the No.3 and 4 positions to Sanjay Mande and Jagan Bengle. Among women, the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th rankings have also gone to Indians - P. Nirmala, D. Yuvarani, and Sangeeta Chandorkar. Six nations had participated in the First Championship in New Delhi in 1991. The U.S.A., U.K., Italy, and Australia entered for the first time in Colombo.

## Hot for horses

The horses likely to participate in the Equestrian events at the Atlanta Olympic Games next July had a warm-up session in September. The animals could not bear the heat, according to the U.S. Humane Society, which say the heat in July would be still unbearable. It has asked for a postponement of the events to more favourable months or a change of venue—like Canada. A different opinion is voiced by the veterinary doctor attached to the Olympic Games Committee: "Heat does not pose a problem to the horses!"





## FAVOURITE OF FORTUNE

Do you know there is a particular flower which is the favourite of the Goddess of Fortune? It is called *Srivati* in Sanskrit. It has the white mark with which we usually associate Lord Vishnu or Krishna. Its other common name is *Nagavali*; in Bengali it is *Nagabali*; in Tamil *Vellaiyilai*; in Malayalam *Parathole*; in Marathi *Bhutkas* or *Bhutkesa*; and in Hindi *Pedina*. Its botanical name is *Mussaenda Frondosa*. Vast tracts of land in Brindavan, between Mathura and Bharatpur, where Krishna spent his childhood, abounds in this tree, which is also common in the Nilgiris and other areas of the Western Ghats, besides around Darjeeling, in West Bengal.

This small tree, only 6m tall, has deep green leaves, among which there will be one large pure white or creamy white leaf. This leaf is actually the enlargement of one of the sepals. The leaves come out in pairs and are opposite to each other. They are oval in shape and about 12cm long, and tapering at the apex. The midrib is prominent on both sides. While the surface above is a deep green, it is pale below.

The flowers, orange in colour inside and a grey outside, are not very large. The calyx consists of five sepals; one of these begins to enlarge into a leaf-like structure, assuming a size as large as the other leaves. While this sepal remains as a leaf, the other sepals fall off. The flowers are generally used for garlands and tied over the front door during festivals.

The fruit is egg-shaped. In the beginning it is green and later turns black. Almost all parts of the plant have medicinal value.





## DURVASA

Once Lord Siva made an arrow in order to destroy some hostile beings. He endowed the arrow with life. The arrow went forth and did its job, but returned to its Divine maker and lay on his lap like an infant in need of loving care. Indeed, Siva grew affectionate towards the one he had made and it changed into a human child.

It was this child who grew into the sage, Durvasa. He had been designed to destroy! That destructive quality remained in him in the form of anger. He could be easily provoked to utter a curse. At the same time, he could be easily appeased.

Who does not know the story of Dushyanta and Shakuntala? Shakuntala, the foster-daughter of Sage Kanva, secretly married King Dushyanta who promised to take her to his palace later. One day, Durvasa arrived at Kanva's *ashram* when Shakuntala sat absorbed thinking of Dushyanta. As she took no notice of him, the angry hermit cursed her, saying: "The one about whom you are thinking so deeply would completely forget you!"

That is why the king could not even recognise Shakuntala when she was led to his palace. Later, if he remembered her, it was because Durvasa had softened his curse at the request of Shakuntala's friends.

Durvasa's conduct was unpredictable even with the greatest. Then why speak of sages and ordinary mortals? Once when Krishna was ruling Dwaraka, the sage was his guest and wanted him to prepare *Payasam* for him. Krishna and his queen, Rukmini, personally cooked the sweet delicacy. But, then, Durvasa passed a strange order: Krishna must smear himself with the *Payasam*! Krishna obeyed him even without a murmur.

As if that was not enough, Durvasa developed a desire to have a ride in a chariot which should be drawn not by horses but by Krishna and Rukmini!

The chariot was made ready at once and Krishna and his queen drew it right into the forest. Only then the other side of the sage's mind was revealed. He got down from the chariot and blessed Krishna, saying: "Your humility is exemplary. I bless you that your body, smeared by the *Payasam*, shall be invincible. No weapon can harm it."

Alas, Krishna had not smeared his feet with the *Payasam*. That is why his end came when an arrow pierced one of his feet. It had been sent by a hunter who mistook them to be the ears of a deer.





# DO YOU KNOW?

1. Who was the first astronaut?
2. What is known as the McMahon line?
3. How big is a whale?
4. How many of the volcanoes in the world are considered "active"?
5. When was the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) formed?
6. How far can a kangaroo jump?
7. Who discovered penicillin? When?
8. What is 'Jantar Mantar'? Where is it located?
9. How much time does the sun take for one rotation on its axis?
10. Who founded the Brahmo Samaj?
11. When was Badminton first played?
12. When was Rabindranath Tagore awarded the Nobel Prize?
13. Lord Buddha first preached in a deer park more than 2,500 years ago. Where is this park?
14. When was the commercial broadcast called 'Vividh Bharati' started?
15. An organisation that employs the largest number of people in the world is in India. Which?
16. Mahatma Gandhi's *samadhi* is known as Raj Ghat in Delhi. Where is the *samadhi* of Kasturba Gandhi?
17. Who was the last Mughal ruler?
18. When was the first postage stamp issued in India?
19. Where was the first Asian Games held? When? Who won the championship?

## ANSWERS

1. John H. Glenn
2. It is an imaginary boundary line between India and Tibet drawn by Sir Henry McMahon as the demarcation between India and Tibet (before it became part of China).
3. The female blue whale is the biggest of all animals. It is nearly 90ft long and weighs about 100 tonnes.
4. About 850.
5. In 1969.
6. In one jump it can cover between 7 and 9 metres.
7. Alexander Fleming of Britain, in 1928.
8. It is an observatory in Delhi constructed by Maharaja Jai Singh of Amber in 1724 – now a famous tourist attraction.
9. 25 days at the Equator and 33 days near the Poles.
10. Raja Ram Mohun Roy.
11. In 1870, at Badminton, a village in Gloucestershire, West England.
12. In 1913 – for his work *Gitanjali*.
13. In Sarnath, near Benares.
14. On October 3, 1957.
15. The Indian Railways – nearly 20 lakhs employees.
16. In the grounds of the Aga Khan Palace, in Pune, where she passed away.
17. Bahadur Shah Zafar.
18. In 1852. The stamp is known as the 'Scinde Dawk'.
19. In 1951, in New Delhi. Japan led the medals tally.





## CONFIRMATION OF AGE

Wealthy Dorairaj was looking for a cowherd. When he met his friend, Atmaraj, he asked him to recommend a suitable hand. "I'm looking for someone who'll be active in shower and shine. He must not mind working hard. And he should not be more than twenty years old."

"I shall look for someone who meets your requirements," said the friend. A couple of days later, someone came to meet Dorairaj, saying he had been sent by Atmaraj. Durairaj took a good look at him. He thought the man was older than what he had stipulated. "You look lean and famished, and quite old, too. I wonder whether you can run after the cattle."

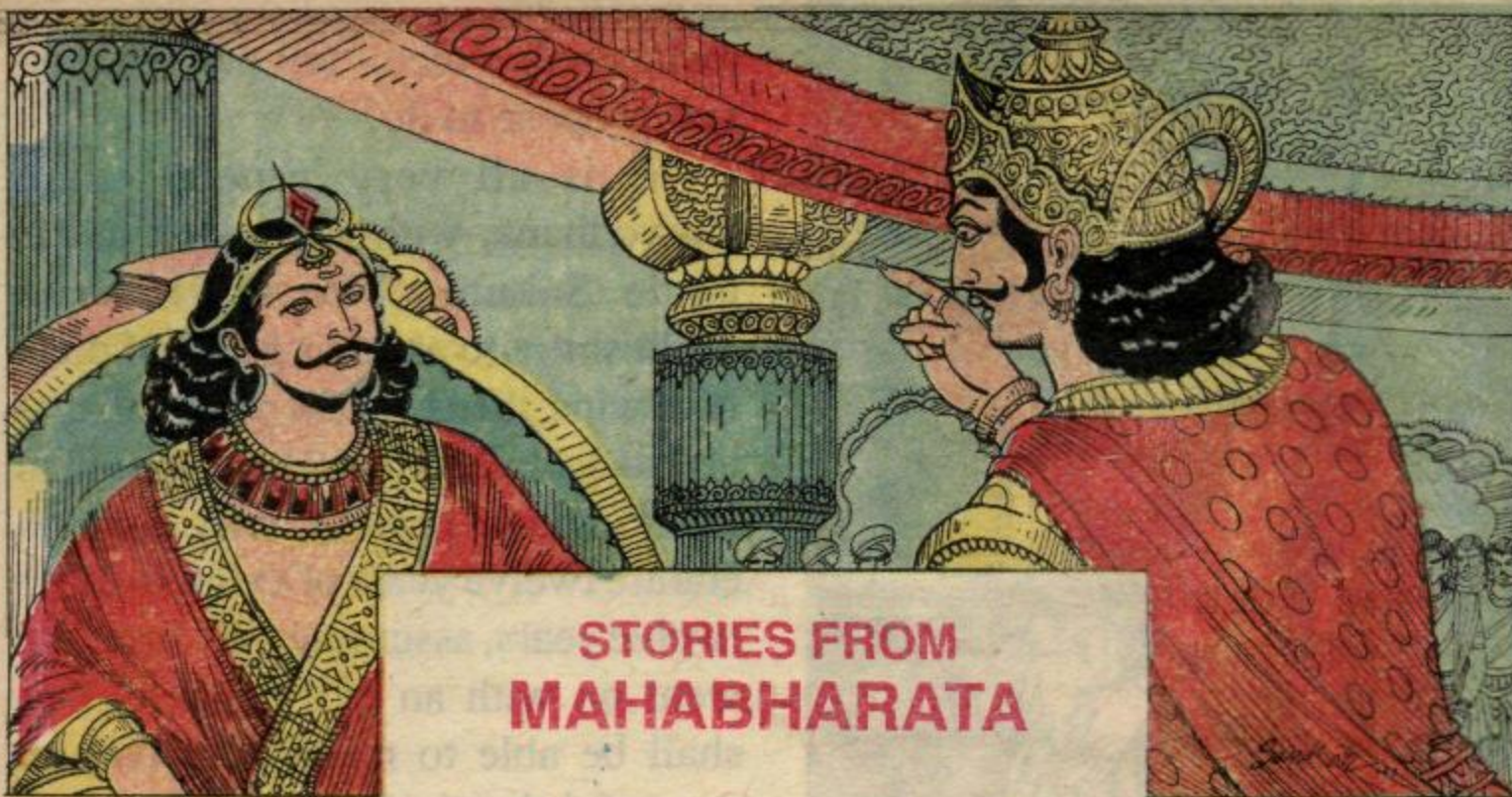
"I'm no more than twenty, sir," the man pleaded. "Everybody in my family is lean and lanky. I'm quite capable of managing the cattle. I assure you, I shall serve you faithfully."

"All right," said Durairaj. "You may remain here, today. See that rats don't nibble at the salt bags."

The man appeared surprised. "In my forty years, this is the first time I'm hearing that rats eat salt."







## STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

The story so far:

*The enmity between the Kaurava and the Pandava princes deepens with the passing of time. After Yudhishtira had performed the Imperial Yajna and had been proclaimed Emperor, Duryodhana conspired with his uncle Sakuni to cheat the Pandavas. Their vile scheme to invite Yudhishtira to a game of dice is crowned with success. Playing against loaded dice, Yudhishtira loses game after game. His empire and his wealth, his slaves and all his possessions, are all staked and lost. The madness increased, and Yudhishtira stakes his brothers, then himself, and then the fair Draupadi, and loses! Thus the Emperor of Indraprastha and his family become the bonded slaves of wily Duryodhana. But the old King Dhritarashtra, tormented by his conscience, releases them from actual slavery.*

**A**fter Yudhishtira and his brothers left the gaming hall, each trying to solace the tearful Draupadi, an angry discussion broke out between the Kaurava princes and their father, the blind King Dhritarashtra.

Duryodhana was seething with anger and he upbraided the old king unmercifully. "Why did you release them from bondage?" he shouted.

"Don't you realise, now that they are free, with the help of their powerful allies, they would plan revenge on us?"

The old king tried hard to regain his regal dignity. "You speak foolishly, my son," he said. "Your mind is besotted with the downfall of your cousins, the Pandavas. Yet never will you realise that your madness will

### 13. TO FOREST FOR TWELVE YEARS





lead to the destruction of us all."

"Such talk is nonsense," angrily retorted Duryodhana. Then, turning to the assembly, he went on with his tirade. "Do you not all agree that we must defeat these arrogant Pandavas by guile? If they are now permitted to go free, sooner or later they will turn on us and conquer this kingdom. So, I say, now is the time for us to deprive them of all their power and glory."

There were immediate shouts of assent from his brothers, and from hot-heads like Karna, while Vidura and Drona remained silent.

"As you all seem bent on courting disaster," said the old king in a

melancholy voice, "tell me, what do you propose to do?"

"It is all very simple," said Duryodhana, with a sly look at his uncle Sakuni. "We shall invite Yudhishtira to another game of dice. If he wins, then he shall regain all that he has lost. But should he lose, then the Pandava princes will have to endure twelve years of exile. In those twelve years, assuming they lose," he went on with an evil chuckle, "we shall be able to make ourselves so powerful that the Pandavas would no longer be a threat to our kingdom."

As usual, the weak-willed king gave in to Duryodhana's arguments and the entreaties of his other sons. It was decided to invite Yudhishtira to yet another game of dice.

When the invitation was handed to Yudhishtira, his brothers Arjuna and Bhima exclaimed hotly that this was nothing but a trick to disgrace them, and the invitation should be treated with scorn. But Yudhishtira argued that a challenge to a game of dice could not in honour be refused. At least it was an opportunity to win back all that they had lost.

So, Yudhishtira once again sat down to play against Sakuni, who was obviously gloating over his opponent's unwise decision and was



anxious for the game to start. Before the dice was thrown, it was announced that the stake would be the return of Yudhishtira's empire if he won, but if he lost, then the Pandava princes would go into exile in the forest and remain there for twelve years and spend the thirteenth year in hiding. If they are found out during the thirteenth year, then they would have to undergo a further twelve years of exile. Only when their exile had been justly completed would their kingdom be restored to them.

This ominous condition should have warned Yudhishtira that the game would be crooked. But he seemed to be under some spell and played.

Needless to say, he met with defeat, and the Pandava princes were obliged to get ready to go into the forest in exile.

The Kaurava princes were jubilant at last and lost no time in deriding and making fun of the Pandavas, who stood there glum, in stoney silence. Dusshasana, not to be outdone, tried to drag Draupadi away. "Come with me," he said boldly. "Let them go into the forest, but you can stay with us and choose a new husband."

With one bound, Bhima pushed Dusshasana roughly aside. "Hold your vile tongue," he said savagely. "And mistake me not, for the day will surely dawn when I will shed your





blood on the battlefield."

After bowing to the elders in their parting meetings, the Pandava princes strode resolutely from the hall and headed for the palace chambers to take their leave from their mother, Queen Kunti.

The dowager queen blessed her sons and embracing Draupadi, she said, "Grieve not, my daughter, if bitter fortune ordains this parting. You will find that virtue and righteous truth have their rewards."

Then, before they left, Queen Kunti asked Draupadi to take special care of Sahadeva who, unlike his twin brother, did not enjoy good health.

When the Pandavas set out for the forest, the people who thronged the streets openly wept and many shook their fist towards the palace, at such blatant injustice to their princes.

The blind Dhritarashtra sent for

Vidura and asked him to describe the departure of the princes into exile.

Vidura answered gravely: "This is a sorrowful day for the kingdom, but destiny cannot be changed. The people are accusing you and your sons of driving the princes into exile. I fear that this day's deeds will bring terrible retribution to the Kauravas."

Duryodhana, hearing Vidura's ominous words, turned to Drona and said: "Surely, you agree that what we have done is right?"

Drona sadly shook his head: "I believe that the Pandavas are of divine birth and are unconquerable, yet my duty lies with the sons of Dhritarashtra. I will strive with you, but destiny is all powerful, and when the Pandavas return, we shall have to fight a war which the gods have ordained. We may not win or even survive."

**(To Continue)**





## Fried or Boiled

Gopal went to the mental hospital to enquire about one of his relations undergoing treatment there. He waited in the visitors room till the attendants could go and fetch his relation. A man came and joined him in the bench he was sitting. "Have you also come here to meet a patient?" asked Gopal.

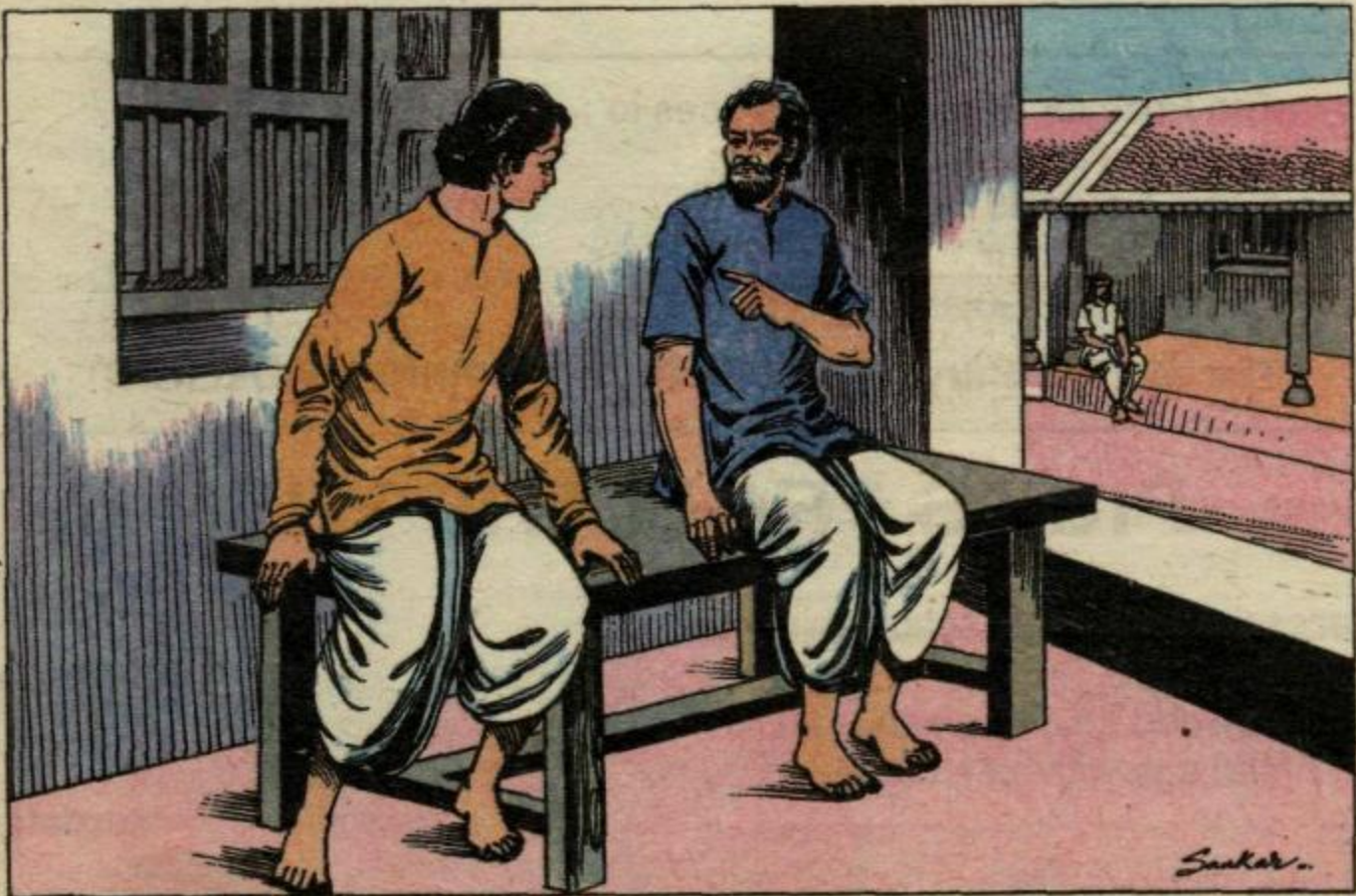
"I 've been here for the last four months," replied the man. "My relations brought me here saying I was mentally deranged."

"But you look quite normal," said Gopal to put him at ease.

"I'm afraid, the treatment given here has only worsened my condition," the man added, sadly. "Could I ask you something? Do you like wooden sandals or leather slippers more?"

"Of course, leather slippers," replied Gopal.

"And how would you like it, fried or boiled?"





# PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mahantesh C. Morabad



Mahantesh C. Morabad

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? You may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by the 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

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The Prize for September '95 goes to :-

**Naveen Tahilyani**

Room No. 1505

I.I.M., Vastrapur

Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

The winning entry : "ROLLER RIDE", "SPINNER'S DELIGHT"

---

## PICKS FROM THE WISE

Necessity is a violent school mistress.

-Montaigne

One crowded hour of glorious life is  
Worth an age without a name.

- Mordaunt



## The Last Resort

Madhav of Madipakkam called on his friend Narayan of Nanganallur. He had taken two beautiful framed pictures of deities for Narayan, as he had a fancy for such pictures. He wanted to mount them on the wall then and there. He called his son. "Go and get the hammer from our neighbour."

The boy came back. "They don't have a hammer."

"Is it so? All right, try at the house this side."

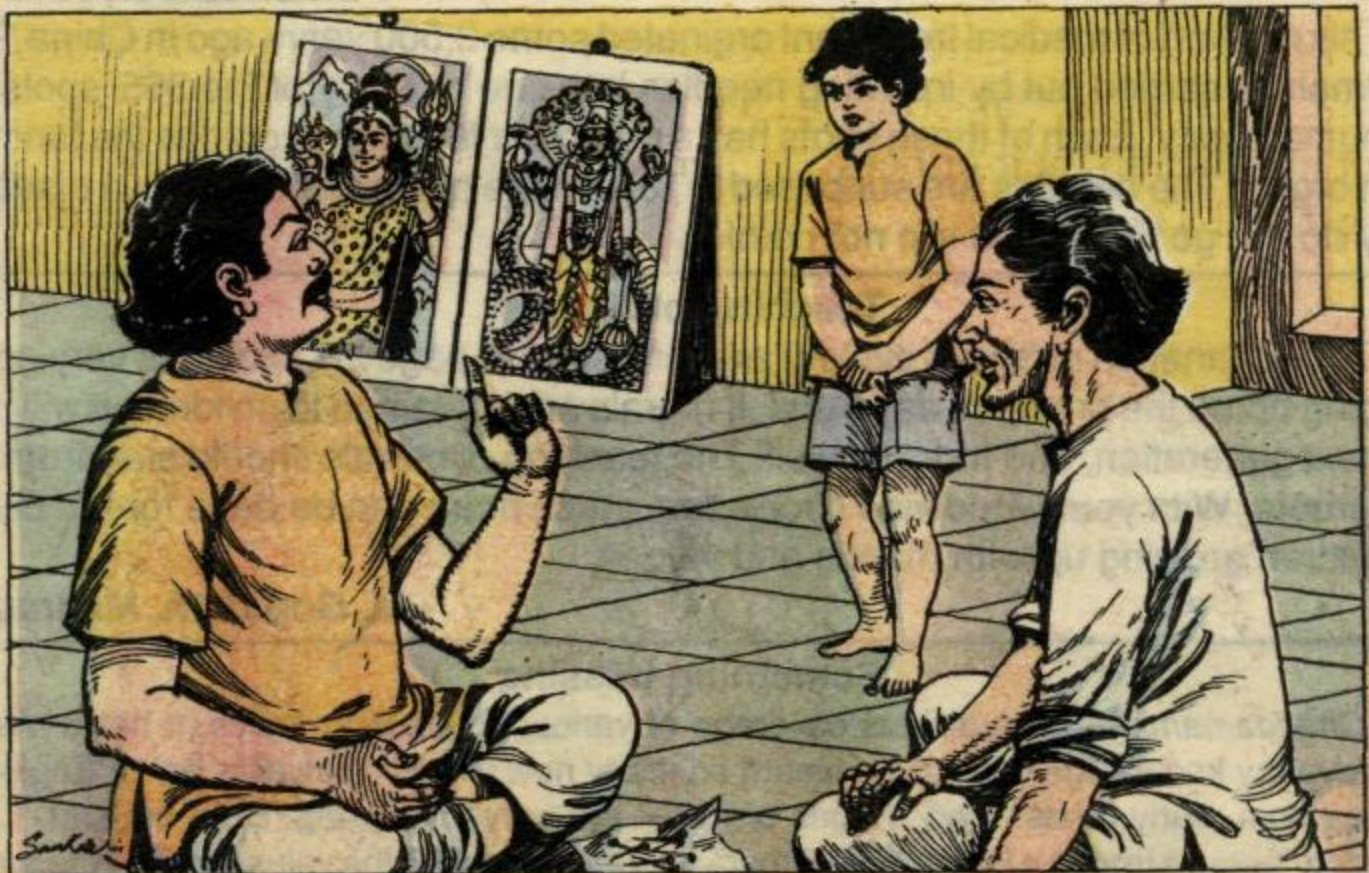
The boy returned empty-handed. "They also don't have a hammer."

"The house opposite may have a hammer," said Narayan and sent the boy once again.

The boy came back and said, "They, too, don't have a hammer."

"See that!" remarked Narayan, turning to Madhav. "Nobody here wants to help another. A whole selfish lot!" He then told his son, "Go and get the hammer from my tool-box."

Madhav strained to control his laughter.







*How did the name America come into being?*

**- D. Seethalakshmi, Munnar**

There was an Italian navigator called Amerigo Vespucci. He made several voyages between 1497 and 1504. In the first voyage, he reached the mouth of the Amazon and sailed into the river for some distance, and on the way back he reached first Trinidad and then Haiti. He was under the impression that he was sailing along the coast of Asia! In his second voyage, he reached the coast of Brazil and discovered the Plate river. All this was considered a New World, which was then named after him.

*What is acupuncture? When was it first used?*

**-Purnendu Sar, Hirakud**

This method of medical treatment originated some 2,500 years ago in China. The treatment is carried out by inserting needles into one or many of the 365 'spots' on the human body. Each of these spots has a particular function or guides the function of an organ. The needles are supposed to relieve the nerves affected by a disease. They do not go deep, and are not painful.

### **Teaching of Morals**

The explanation of 'spoils system' on Let Us Know page in October is very good, bringing home the present day trend. If morals are explained to children, it will help the next generation, and India as well. The teaching of morals should start from the grassroots. With your worldwide circulation, much more can be done for the cause of children growing up with morals and values.

**-M. Gopinath, Madras 24**

### **Something missing**

*Chandamama* has a judicious coverage of various interesting topics: It helps me to improve my knowledge of English. I learn so many new words. "Towards better English", "Tales from many lands", and "Sages of India" are very interesting. But I am sad. I am missing "Leaves from the Lives of the Great". You always add to the value, and not the price.

**-Aparajita, Godbhaga, Orissa**





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